by Carsun Chang

WANG YANG-MING

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the idealist philosopher of 16th century china

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Wang Yang-Ming

WANG YANG-MING:

IDEALIST PHILOSOPHER OF SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CHINA

by

CARSUN CHANG

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Editor's Preface

The Institute of Asian Studies at St. John's University, New York, is pleased to publish Dr. Carsun Chang's study of Wang Yang-ming as the first of its studies on an individual Chinese philosopher. Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529) was the last great creative thinker associated with the Neo-Confucian development of the Sung period (960-1279), although Wang himself was born two centuries later in the Ming period (1368-1644).

If Chu Hsi during the Sung period brought Confucian thought to its highest expression in the realm of cosmology, Wang Yang-ming brought this same tradition to its finest expression in the realm of epistemology and possibly in ontology. Yet, there are few studies of

Wang in any Western language. The writings on this subject in English by Dr. Chang may therefore be considered of exceptional importance. Several essays by Dr. Chang already have appeared in periodicals here and abroad. However, the present study is his most thorough and perhaps his most penetrating study of Wang thus far to appear in the United States.

Dr. Chang was educated at Waseda University and the University of Berlin. During the 1920's he proved himself one of the most capable of Chinese philosophers. He later founded a political college at Shanghai. In recent years Dr. Chang has lectured in India, Australia, and at the University of Washington, Seattle. He is considered by both Western and Eastern scholars as a leading authority on the Confucian-thought tradition and has written a number of books in Chinese. His best-known work in English is *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957).

We deeply appreciate Dr. Chang's cooperation in making this study available to the English-speaking world. The Epilogue on Chinese Intuitionism has been abridged from an article originally appearing in the journal *Philosophy East and West* (April-July, 1960). We are indebted to the editor, Dr. Charles A. Moore, for granting permission to reproduce it here.

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Contents

	Editor's Preface	v
I	The Life of Wang Yang-ming	1
II	His System of Philosophy	13
III	His Position in Neo-Confucianism	51
IV	The Philosophic Dialogues	69
V	A Study of Chinese Intuitionism	75
	Appendix	95
	Selected Bibliography	99

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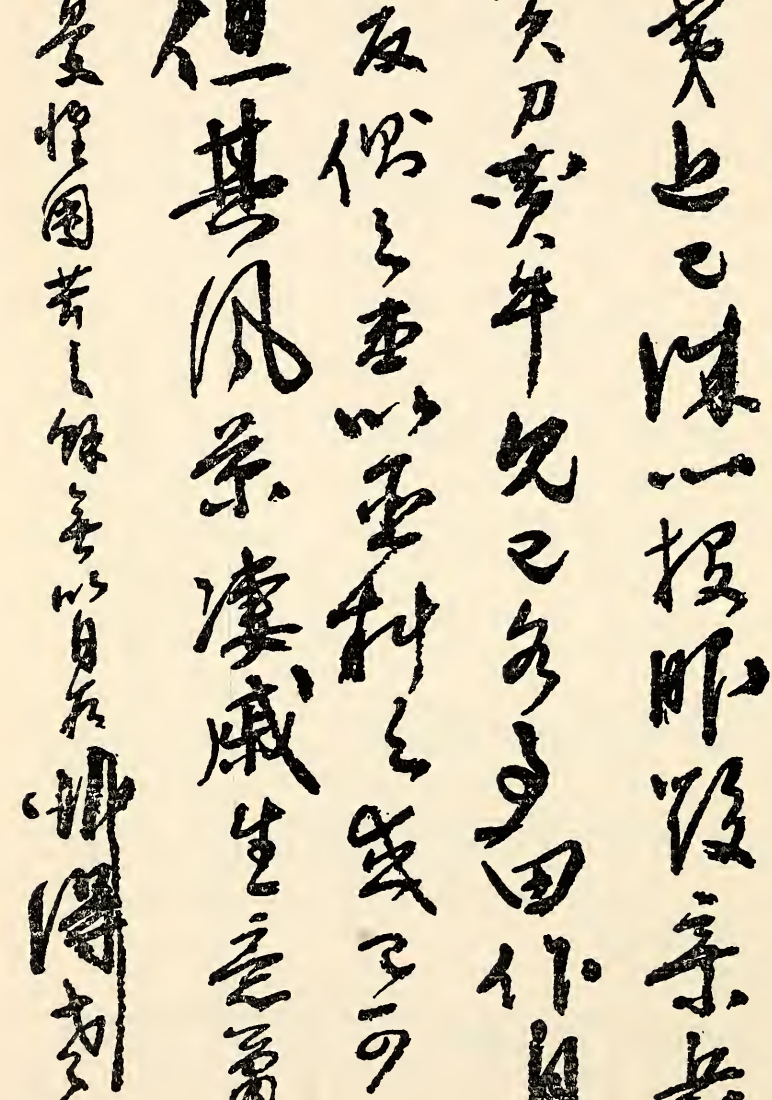

Facsimile of Wang Yang-Ming's Calligraphy

I

THE LIFE OF WANG YANG-MING (1472-1529)

Wang Shou-jen, commonly known as Wang Yang-ming, was born in 1472, the eighth year of Ch'eng-hua of the Emperor Hsien-tsung of the Ming dynasty. When he was eleven years old he was brought to Peking. At a banquet the boy surprised his great-grandfather's friends by contributing the following verse:

> Chin-shan is a small point resembling a fist
> Which breaks the watery bottom of Yang-chou.
> After drinking I lean against the pavilion facing the moon
> And listen to the tune of a jade flute
> Which suggests a lullaby for a cave dragon.

The guests were astonished by the mature thought of the boy's poem and they offered him another theme for a new verse. Without spending much time he wrote:

> When the mountain is near and the moon at a great distance
> You find that the moon is small.
> You express this by saying: "The mountain is greater than the moon."

But if a man's eye were as vast as heaven
He would feel that the mountain is small and
the moon is great.

The following year Wang asked the family tutor: "What is a first rate accomplishment for a man?" The tutor replied. "To succeed in the State examinations through much practice of reading and writing." The boy said, "I doubt it. A really first rate accomplishment would be to become a sage." When his father heard this story he laughed and said: "So you have decided to become a sage!"

While still an adolescent, Wang travelled to the Great Wall and stayed about a month. Upon his return he dreamed of visiting the temple of Ma Yuan, a general of the Eastern Han dynasty who had conquered Annam. Wang composed a poem beginning with the line: "General Ma Yuan came back after accomplishing a military feat. . . . " Many years later Wang Yang-ming was to die in this very temple. The poem is therefore sometimes considered a prophecy of his future success as well as of his death place.

A curious story is told of the ceremony at which Wang's engagement to marry was announced. He absented himself to visit a Taoist monastery to hear a monk discourse on longevity and was not found until the next morning.

In 1489 Wang brought his wife from Kiang-si to his home in the Yu-yao district of Chekiang. En route he visited the philosopher Lou Liang at Kuang-hsin.

This stopover would suggest that he was already interested in the Neo-Confucian thought of the Sung dynasty. In this connection it is interesting to note that Wang, while still an adolescent, attempted to discover the meaning of the phrase "investigation of things," an important aspect of Neo-Confucian philosophic discussion. In his grandfather's garden he pondered the bamboo in an effort to ferret out its nature — a procedure suggested to him by the dictum of Chu Hsi that each thing has its principle. But though young Wang pondered long, he achieved no significant result other than learning how extremely difficult it was to become a sage.

Next we discover him studying literature, hoping to embark upon a civil service career, but at the outset he failed in the provincial examinations. His colleagues who also failed the examinations felt ashamed, but Wang consoled them with the remark: "Some consider failure in the examinations a disgrace. I consider being perturbed by this failure a disgrace." Nevertheless, Wang did eventually win his *Chin-shih* degree and was appointed a clerk in the ministry of public works. He became interested in the incidents along the border of the empire and addressed memoranda to the emperor on the subject.

In 1500 Wang was transferred to the Ministry of Justice and became an inspector of judicial cases. After two years he requested a leave of absence and returned to his native place. His interest in literature had declined, and he found that he had begun to look upon the ways of Buddhism and Taoism as mistaken. In his

home province he asked a meditating Buddhist monk: "Do you sometimes think about your parents?" The monk said that he did. This reply, Wang explained to the monk, must be taken as proof that filial love is an integral part of the nature of man.

Wang was next appointed examiner for Shantung Province and was transferred to the personnel division of the Ministry of War. Despite his official duties he began to receive students in 1505, advising them to aspire to sagehood.

The thirty-fifth year of Wang's life (1506) marked the turning point in his career. Because he had defended two censors who had submitted memoranda requesting the impeachment of a powerful eunuch, Liu Chin, he was arrested and given forty strokes. This almost killed him, but he had the strength to revive and lived to be exiled at Kweichow. On his journey he was pursued by spies. A poem written during this period signifies his pure conscience and awareness of duty:

> Unmindful of personal risk or safety —
> Which are but floating clouds in the heavens,
> I feel as if I were on a vast ocean thirty thousand miles wide on a quiet night,
> With a bright moon shining, silver-hued, and a breeze.

In exile he worked as a sub-magistrate in the Lung-ch'ang district. The only language spoken was the dialect of the Miao and Yao tribes, and so he could not mingle with the natives. Nor could he find a ready-made

dwelling, but had to cut lumber and build his own house. He continued to hear rumors that the anger of Liu Chin, the eunuch, had not lessened. The philosopher feared that harm might come to him at night even in remote Lung-ch'ang. Nevertheless, he tended the students who had followed him into exile and sought to please them by singing songs. Most of the students were ill. He recalled the words of Confucius and Mencius that one should feel happy and leave everything to the wisdom of heaven.

In addition to such practical and humane work, Wang Yang-ming contemplated the meaning of the phrases "Investigation of Things" and "Realization of Knowledge." He learned that, according to Chu Hsi, *things* and *knowledge* are separate and there is no integration between them. This question had worried him ever since his contemplation of the bamboo at his grandfather's home. Then one night, in the year 1508, he awoke and shouted so loudly that people living nearby were startled. What caused his excitement was that upon awakening he had suddenly discovered that so-called *things* are not entities in the external world but objects of consciousness. He reached the conclusion that reason or knowledge exists only in the mind. This theory he attempted to apply to every passage in the *Five Classics* which involves the phrase "Investigation of Things." During his exile in Lung-ch'ang he is said to have written a book expounding this application; all that has survived in his collected works are a preface and thirteen short items concerning the *Five Classics.*

For a time he considered writing a commentary on the *Five Classics,* but abandoned the idea.

While still in exile he propounded the phrase "Unity of Knowledge and Action" as the key to his philosophy. Hsu Ai, one of the disciples who had followed him to Kweichow, remarked to him in 1509: "I do not understand the meaning of the doctrine of the integration of knowledge and action." The master replied: "Please give me an example, showing why you do not understand." Hsu Ai complied: "Suppose a man knows that a son should be obedient to his father and that a brother should have fraternal regard for his brothers. Now, if such a man cannot carry out this filial obedience and fraternal deference, it is obvious that *knowing* and *doing,* knowledge and action, are two different things." Wang Yang-ming replied: "In the case of this man, the apparent disunity between knowledge and action arises from his *knowing* and *doing* being separated by selfish motives. This separation is not part of the original nature of cognition. This has been demonstrated clearly in the *Ta-hsüeh* (Great Learning) where it is said: "Be fond of what is beautiful. Dislike what smells foul." To see what is beautiful is to *know;* to be fond of, or to like, what is beautiful is to *do.* The liking immediately accompanies the seeing. It is not that after seeing you begin to like. Similarly, to smell a foul stench is to *know.* To dislike it is to *do.* Disliking goes with smelling the unpleasant odor, and the latter does not begin after the former has ended. To describe a man as obedient or brotherly is to imply that this man has al-

ready put the idea of filial duty or of fraternal love into practice. Such is the original nature of the unity of knowledge and action."

But Hsu Ai was still unsatisfied. "In the olden days," he said, "the very fact that *knowing* and *doing* were dealt with separately indicates that they were progressive steps. One had to proceed gradually." Wang countered: "You missed the meaning of the words of the ancients. According to my interpretation, to *know* is to resolve to *do;* to *do* is to put knowledge into practice. *Knowing* is the beginning of *doing; doing* is the realization of *knowing.*"

In the discussions that took place during Wang Yang-ming's days of exile in Lung-ch'ang we have the foundations of his philosophic system. After three years of banishment, he was promoted to the magistracy of the district of Lu-ling in Kiang-si Province, and with this transfer his exile came to an end.

Eventually, the eunuch Liu Chin was put to death and Wang was reinstated in the imperial favor and given other positions in the government. He continued to gather friends around him to discuss philosophy. To them he expressed his deep appreciation and advised them that they could "console one another best" by improving their moral character. "In so doing, it is as if we dug a well wherever water was abundant."

In 1516 Wang Yang-ming became assistant secretary of the board of censors and concurrently governor of an area where three provinces meet: namely, Kiang-si, Kwang-tung, and Fukien. Bandits infested this area,

and on Wang fell the task of suppressing them. "Bandits," he said, "are like a disease of the body. Crushing by military force is a kind of surgical operation. The office of the magistrate is for the protection of the people — as it were, for nourishing them."

At the same time he continued to teach his thirty disciples and discussed with them the text of the *Tahsüeh* (Great Learning). He also published a collection of the sayings of Chu Hsi under the title *Definite Views of Chu Hsi in His Later Years.*

In 1519 Wang Yang-ming was instrumental in the suppression of the rebellion of Prince Ch'en Hao. The prince, whose fief was Nan-ch'ang in Kiang-si Province, was suspected of preparing to lead his followers on a march to Peking or Nanking. If he succeeded in seizing either of the cities, his influence would grow and the imperial government would be in danger. To ensure that Prince Ch'en Hao would not begin such a march, Wang put into operation such ruses as forged documents requesting the emperor to send reinforcements to Kiangsi and caused these documents to fall into the hands of the prince, who was misled by them and remained at home to protect his property.

Wang's military success in suppressing the prince's rebellion in less than forty days increased his fame; he was respected not only as a philosopher but as a strategist. Throughout the campaign against Prince Ch'en Hao, Wang continued his philosophic discussions with his disciples.

In 1522, upon the death of his father and in accord-

ance with Chinese custom, Wang entered a three-year period of mourning. He remained at home although he had been appointed minister of military affairs by the new emperor, Shih-tsung.

In the period 1520-1524 Wang Yang-ming did much philosophical work. In a letter of 1520 to Lo Ch'in-shun, he discusses the restoration of the old text of the *Ta-hsüeh*. In the same year, Wang accepted Wang Ken as a disciple, an event which moved his heart to a far greater extent than had the capture of Prince Ch'en Hao. In 1521 he pronounced the phrase "Realization of Intuitive Knowledge," which served as recognition of the integration of knowledge and action. When one of his disciples remarked: "The more distinguished you become, Sir, the more you are slandered. This is because the majority of the people are jealous of you," Wang Yang-ming replied, "The more convinced I am of my philosophy, the more completely I rid myself of the habits of the philistine." He implied that, having learned to act in accordance with intuitive knowledge, he was no longer concerned about what people said of his philosophy.

At the end of his period of mourning (1524) Wang Yang-ming gathered more than one hundred disciples on the heavenly fountain bridge and engaged in philosophical debate. Excursions were made to nearby mountains and streams in order to achieve harmony with Great Nature.

In one of these discussions, Wang Yang-ming presented the following conclusions to his disciples. He said

that a seeker-after-truth, instead of indulging in speculation, should maintain self-discipline in accordance with four aphorisms:

1. The reality of mind, or mind *per se,* is beyond good and evil.
2. What is stirred up in the will may be good and evil.
3. To know what is good and evil is the function of *Liang-chih.*
4. To do what is good and to shun what is evil is the result of the "investigation of things."

This conversation is particularly important in view of the fact that some of Wang's pupils later taught that Wang's phrase "beyond good and evil" was the substance of his philosophy. This false notion placed the spiritual descendants of Wang in disrepute.

At the emperor's command, Wang reluctantly agreed in 1526 to attempt to suppress the bandits in Kwang-si. Announcing a policy of appeasement, he persuaded the bandits to disband, and an educational program was introduced to train the people of this area.

In the winter of 1528, although suffering from dysentery and weakened by the cold weather, Wang undertook a visit to the temple of Ma Yuan, conquerer of Annam during the Eastern Han dynasty. At the temple in Nan-ning, Kwang-si Province, the meaning of the dream he had had in his fifteenth year was revealed to

him: he would come upon Ma Yuan after a great military victory. The prophecy was fulfilled. Wang wrote two odes about his dream, one of which runs thus:

Forty years ago I wrote a poem about a dream
Which meant that this journey was pre-ordained
In heaven and not determined by man.
Though my battles may be compared
to a campaign of wind and cloud,
Where I have gone I have been applauded
like rain after the dry season.
Though the people have surrendered themselves to me,
I have had no way to lighten their sufferings.
Since my achievements are attributed to the Emperor
I am ashamed to speak of the suppression of the barbarians by the sword.

On January 9, 1529, Wang Yang-ming died. He was buried in his native town. However, his ideas elicited a wide response from thinking men and provided the inspiration for the most active schools of thought in the later Ming period.

II

WANG YANG-MING'S SYSTEM OF PHILOSOPHY

The fundamental conviction upon which Wang Yang-ming based his system of philosophy was a firm belief in the intelligibility of the world in which we live. An analysis of his doctrines may be given as follows:

1. Man's mind is the mind of the universe.
2. The mind's knowing is the core of reality; that is, reality is contained in consciousness.
3. Through knowing, the principles of everything can be found; things are not external to us but are objects of consciousness.
4. The universe is a unity in which man is the mind or center; men comprise a brotherhood, and physical things show a spiritual affinity with mind.
5. If there were no mind or intuitive knowledge, the universe would not operate.
6. Matter, or the world of nature, is material for the mind to work with.

Because of his ontological idealism, Wang does not recognize the Kantian distinction between noumenon and phenomenon; nor does he separate knowledge into

the factors of the given reality and the organization of that reality by the mind (i.e., he does not separate knowledge into the sensation and the forms of sensibility and understanding). For Wang, the act or process of knowing and what is known are one reality; reason is the fundamental essence, and reason is known through the activities of mind.

Wang Yang-ming's premise is the intelligibility of the world. Intuitive knowledge is not restricted to mankind but extends to all animate beings and even to inanimate beings. "Man's intuitive knowledge," Wang said, "is shared by grass and trees, stones and tiles. Grass and trees (suggestive of botany), stones and tiles (suggestive of physics) could not function if they did not possess the capacity to know. The universe itself would be incapable of 'running' or operating, if it were not for man's intuitive knowledge." Elsewhere Wang comments:

> Intelligibility fills the universe. Man, imprisoned in his physical body, is sometimes separated from intelligibility. Nonetheless, his intuitive knowledge is the controlling power of the cosmos and of the gods. If there were in the universe no intellect, who would study the mysteries of the heavens? If there were on earth no human intellect, who would study the profundities of *terra firma?* If the gods had no knowledge of mankind, how could they reveal themselves

in fortune and misfortune? Heaven, earth, and deities would be non-existent if they were separated from the human intellect. On the other hand, if man's intellect were divorced from heaven, earth, and the deities, how could it exercise its functions?

We cannot definitely say that Wang believed in hylozoism, the doctrine that all nature is alive, but something of the sort is implicit in his remark that because animals and grains are nourishment for men, and because herbs and mineral medicines cure diseases, there must be a spiritual affinity between the biological and physical worlds on the one hand and mankind on the other.

That intelligibility exists at the core of the universe was Wang's prime conviction. At this core is man, intimately related to the supersensible world above and the world of nature below. The universe is a unity, with man at its center.

Wang often quoted from the *Chung-yung* (Doctrine of the Golden Mean). For example: "It is said in the *Shih-ching* (Book of Poetry) that the hawk flies up to heaven, fish leap into the deep. This is an allusion to how the way is seen from above and below." Visible are birds flying in heaven, fish swimming in the deep sea; much more lies beyond, and in mystery. What is intelligible is that the whole universe is in harmony.

The Chinese philosopher tells us not only what man *is,* but also what he *should be.* Wang Yang-ming concludes: "The great man is one who has a sense of unity

with the universe. The great man thinks that the whole world is one family. While a man imprisoned in his physical body differentiates between 'you' and 'me,' his feeling is that of the petty man." Wang extends this sense of unity to inanimate objects. Sentimentality is raised to a philosophy:

> The doctrine that human beings have a sense of unity with the universe is not in the least the product of imagination. Rather it comes from the sentiment of *jen* (human-heartedness). Indeed, this nobility is not only characteristic of the great man, but also holds true to some extent of the petty man. When one sees a child about to fall into a well one is aroused by a sense of commiseration. This sense of commiseration makes one feel a unity with the child, who belongs to the same species as one's self.
>
> This feeling of commiseration goes further. When a man hears or sees an animal or bird crying or frightened, he also feels its misery. His *jen* (human-heartedness) leads him to a consciousness of unity with living beings. Further still, when he beholds a great tree falling he feels "what a pity!" His sense of wholeness, thus, extends to plants. In seeing a stone or brick smashed to pieces, a man has this same feeling, thus showing that his sense of integration reaches to inanimate objects. This sentiment of *jen* (human-heartedness) is rooted in man's nature. It is at the same time the intelligence of man and the quality which renders man intelligible; also it is

the illustrious virtue of man.

Someone asked Wang why, if this world is under the rule of love or *jen,* the *Ta-hsüeh* (Great Learning) finds it necessary to discuss the question of what should be done first and what should be done afterwards. The philosopher answered:

> What is discussed here is the natural order of reason. For example, in regard to the human body, the function of the hands and feet is to protect one's head. But this does not mean that one should let one's hands and feet give one's head leisure by doing its work for it. Nevertheless, the natural order of reason should be so. Animals and plants, as previously mentioned, should be cared for by man, yet according to the natural order plants should be given to animals as food. Animals and men alike should be loved, yet it is proper under certain circumstances to kill animals, especially for parents, guests, and as sacrifical offerings. Such is the natural order. Both relatives and strangers should be treated with solicitude, but when only one dish of meal is left, and when the case has to do with saving a life, the natural order requires that the dish should be given first to the relative, not to the stranger. This is the natural order revealed in intuitive knowledge; it is what is *right.*

Wang's world is a community of conscious or moral beings living with animals and plants which possess

spiritual kinship with it. This universe is teleological, for in it consciousness rules and moral values dominate.

Wang taught that *jen* (human-heartedness) is the root of all other virtues. One of his disciples, referring to Ch'eng Hao's words that a man of *jen* has a sense of unity with the cosmos, asked: "If this remark of Ch'eng Hao is correct, why was Mo Ti's theory of universal love refuted by Mencius?" The master replied:

> This is a difficult question, and the solution depends upon one's understanding everything that is involved. *Jen* is the expression of the principle of production and reproduction of living beings. Though the impulse to create is universal, its growth is gradual —step by step. After the winter solstice the first *yang* comes forth, until in summer the *yang* is full. Because this impulse to create is gradual it must have a beginning and then develop further. The process is like that of a tree which originally appears as a shoot, the first fruit of the creative urge. After the shoot there follows the trunk, and from the trunk emerges twigs and branches. If there were no shoot, there would be no trunk nor any of the rest of the tree. Below the shoot, moreover, must be a root which can grow. In the root is life. Without the root the tree would die. Love between parents and children and mutual regard between brothers are the first beginnings of humanity, and are analogues to the young shoots of the vegetable world. These first awakenings of love will later extend to embrace the

love of all one's fellow creatures, who are, as it were, the twigs and branches.

The sense of *jen* is, in other words, of the same nature as the root from which all beings have their origin. It is spiritual, yet also empirical. It is metaphysical and at the same time physical. This doctrine is an excellent illustration of how deeply the metaphysical theory of moral value is embedded in the practical life of mankind. The physical is rooted in a metaphysical truth.

Wang's conception of the oneness of reality is nowhere more vividly expressed than in the following passage which has to do with the universal function of the human senses.

> The eye of a man cannot stand by itself (is not sufficient unto itself) but must have the colors and shapes of all things of the world as its objects. The ear cannot stand by itself, but must have all the kinds of sound in the universe to listen to. The nose cannot stand by itself, but must perceive all the odors in the world. The mouth cannot do otherwise than to taste whatever is tasteful among all things. The function of mind is to know right and wrong concerning challenges and responses between all things and itself.

Thus, the human mind is not only specialized in its various avenues to knowledge, but also it is open far and wide to all the phenomena of the universe.

Wang Yang-ming discussed his theory of mind from two points of view: (1) mind in the naturalistic sense, (2) mind in the normative sense. Often he combines these two views, beginning naturalistically and ending normatively.

"I have the idea to better myself. Why can I not do it?" the disciple Hsiao Hui complained. His master replied: "Explain in detail what your idea to better yourself is." "My idea is to be a good man. Perhaps what I do is more for my physical than my true self," Hsiao Hui continued. Wang Yang-ming interposed:

> The true self cannot be separated from the physical self. I suppose that what you have done is not even good enough for your physical self. The physical self or body consists of the five senses and four limbs.

The disciple said:

> I agree with what you have said. The eyes are fond of beauty. The ears delight in beautiful voices. The mouth craves delicious tastes. The four limbs take delight in comfort. These pleasures make me unable to control myself.

Wang Yang-ming continued:

> Beautiful colors blind the eyes. Beautiful sounds deafen the ears. Delicious tastes stop up the mouth with too much flavor. Racing and hunting drive one

mad. All these delights are harmful to the eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and four limbs. They do no good to the senses nor to the arms nor legs. If you care for your senses and limbs, do not give first thought to how your ears should listen, or to how your eyes should see, or to how your mouth should speak, or to how your arms and legs should move. If you can control your senses and bodily parts to conform to the Confucian rule that seeing, hearing, speaking, and motion should abide by the principle of decency, you will understand well enough what is good for your senses and limbs. But to bring your seeing, hearing, speaking, and physical movements into conformity with the principle of decency requires more than merely to leave them to your body.

This accomplishment depends completely on mind. Seeing, listening, speaking, and motion are the work of mind. To be sure, your mind-directed vision operates through the organ of your eyes, your mind-directed speech issues from your mouth, your mind-directed movements are put into effect by your four limbs. But each of these functions is mind-directed. Otherwise, that is, if you had no mind, your senses and limbs would be unable to operate. Your mind, moreover, is not a nervous system of flesh and blood.

If it were that and nothing more, a man after death, while he still kept his flesh and blood, would continue to see, hear, and speak. I say that mind is the organ which directs seeing, listening, speaking, and

motion, because mind consists of human nature, — of heavenly reason. Since mind is so constituted, it has its essence, part of which is the virtue of *jen*.

When the essence of mind — constituted as it is of human nature — works in the eyes, the function of seeing is operative. When it works in the ears, hearing takes place. When it works in the mouth, speech occurs. When it works in the limbs, movement ensues. All these are the operations of heavenly reason, which works in mind as master of the physical body. Mind in its essential nature is heavenly reason in the form of decent manners. This is your true self, controller of your physical body. This true self knows self-control even when nobody else is present; knows caution even when eavesdropping is impossible.

In this discourse, Wang starts his discussion of mind at the naturalistic level and ends it at the normative level. In other words, he concludes his remarks with suggestions of what mind *ought* to be, rather than what mind actually is. Normatively, mind is reason.

Here are three definitions of mind from Wang Yang-ming's writings:

"The intrinsic quality of mind is nature, which is reason."

"There is no reason apart from mind."

"The essence of mind is goodness."

From these definitions Wang proceeds to illustrate the nature of mind:

Mind is reason. How can you find reason apart from mind? How can you find so-called *things* outside of the mind? Suppose we talk about service to your parents. How can you find the reason for filial duty in the body of your parents? The reason for filial duty can only be found in your own mind. Suppose we discuss the sense of loyalty. How can you find the reason for loyalty in the body of the king? The reason for loyalty can only be found in your own mind. Or suppose we talk about friendship or the people's ruler. How can you find the principle of honesty in your friend's body, or the principle of benevolence in the people's body? The principles of honesty and benevolence can only be found in mind. When mind is clear, in the right, and unblinded by selfish motives, it acts towards parents in accordance with filial duty, it acts towards the king in accordance with loyalty, and it behaves towards friends and people-at-large in accordance with honesty and benevolence.

Such is the meaning of Wang's maxim, "Mind is Reason," a maxim which we have seen originated with the philosopher Lu Chiu-yüan. Wang Yang-ming followed in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor, and in so doing, moreover, deviated from the orthodox tradition of the school of the Brothers of Ch'eng and Chu Hsi. According to this older tradition, *hsing* (human nature) is reason. The Ch'eng-Chu school held tenaciously to the two-level theory of mind, regarding the

upper level, where reason is stored, as *hsing* (human nature), and the lower level, occupied with awareness and consciousness, *hsin* (mind, in the naturalistic sense). It would be wrong to assert that Lu Chiu-yüan and Wang Yang-ming abandoned the two-level theory *in toto;* rather, they fused the two levels into a single-unit mind—because reason must be expressed through mind, in particular, through the thinking process of mind.

It is no exaggeration to call Wang Yang-ming a follower of Lu Chiu-yüan. In the doctrine that mind is reason the theories of the two philosophers are identical. However, Wang's system as a whole is more comprehensive and precise than his predecessor's. The theory that mind is reason developed to a richer fullness of meaning in Wang's system.

The term *intuitive knowledge* has occurred several times in the exposition of Wang Yang-ming's teachings. The Chinese words for intuitive knowledge are *liang-chih,* signifying the innate faculty of knowing. With our Chinese philosopher, the terms knowing, moral consciousness, and intuitive knowledge coincide in meaning. "*Liang-chih,*" comments Wang, "whether by ordinary man or by a sage, is the same." It means conscience or the concomitant knowledge. "*Liang-chih* through the ages past and through the ages to come has remained and ever will remain the same." *Liang-chih* exists always. If you do not take care to preserve it, you will lose it. In itself it is bright and clear, despite ignorance and blindness. If you do not know enough to keep it

clean, it will become beclouded, but though it may remain thus beclouded for a long time, it nonetheless is essentially brilliant, limpid, and distinct.

In Wang's view, *liang-chih* is part of reason or reality. "Knowing," he said, "is the spiritual part of reason. *Liang-chih* is what is intelligent, clear, and distinct in heavenly reason."

Elsewhere: "*Liang-chih* is heavenly reason."

Again: "When there is motivation it is known to *liang-chih*. Regardless of whether motivation is for good or evil it is known to *liang-chih*."

"*Liang-chih* is your personal criterion. When your will works in a certain direction, *liang-chih* knows whether it is inclined toward right or wrong."

"*Liang-chih* is as bright as a mirror. Nothing that is reflected in it can escape it."

Thus far the quotations from Wang Yang-ming about *liang-chih* show it as working out the functions of pure and practical reason. But if we look at *liang-chih* from another angle, we shall find that it is as aptly described by a quite different quotation from Wang Yang-ming.

Thus: "When your mind is full of wicked motives and they are known to *liang-chih* it can stop them." In other words, when you entertain a good motive, *liang-chih* can develop it; when you entertain an evil motive, *liang-chih* can block it. In this passage *liang-chih* appears as will.

Wang Yang-ming also presents *liang-chih* as an

emotional factor. "*Liang-chih* is a truly good heart." Also: "When you see a child about to fall into a well, you feel pity and try to save the child. This is *liang-chih*. The universe is a unity. The sufferings of the people are the same as disease in your own body. If you do not feel discomfort from disease in your own body it is as if you had lost your ability to discriminate between right and wrong."

The expression *liang-chih* may be translated as *intuitive knowledge*. Wang Yang-ming borrowed this term from the *Meng-tzu* (Book of Mencius). The passage in which it occurs is well worth quoting, for it throws additional light on the meaning of the expression. The famed Second Sage had this to say:

> The ability possessed by men but without having been acquired by learning is intuitive ability. Babes-in-arms all know to love their parents. When they have grown a little, they all know to love their elder brothers. Filial affection is the working of *jen* (human-heartedness). Respect for elders is the working of *i* (righteousness). There is no other reason for these feelings. They belong to all under heaven.

Liang-neng (intuitive ability) or *liang-chih* (intuitive knowledge) might be interpreted by some modern schools as *instinct*. In Wang Yang-ming's system it is a philosophical concept covering the three aspects of conscious life: intellect, will, and emotion.

Many philosophers, including Locke and Hume, have based their philosophic systems upon knowing or understanding or cognition. Less often are systems constructed upon the human will. Yet Schopenhauer, who was much influenced by Buddhist teachings, did just this. Wang Yang-ming, although he placed emphasis on intuitive knowledge, as shown in the passages quoted above, was scarcely less emphatic in describing the philosophic role of the will.

Wang stresses "true" or "real" will. With his usual clarity, Wang says that whenever there is any movement or prompting in the mind, the will is responsible. The way to control the will is to entertain virtuous motives and to eliminate wicked motives. This results in the creation of "true" or "real" will.

One implication of this theory of the "true" or "real" will is correlated with knowing. Any prompting of the will is known to *liang-chih*. Wang skillfully elucidates this proposition:

> When the will is on the move, and a motive is bad, most people will not attempt to stop it, because they suppose that since the motive has not yet been put into practice it has no consequence. According to my doctrine of the unity of knowing and doing, even a prompting of will is a doing, so it should be stopped at once.

According to Wang, then, if a vicious motive can be cleared away, then will, while still at the early stage

of motive, can be put on the right track before it has realized itself in action.

To the subject of will Wang has much to contribute. In his *Answers to Questions Concerning the Book Ta-hsüeh,* he wrote:

> Mind in its original nature is pure and good, but when it is agitated by motivation it can be either good or bad. So-called rectification of mind entails the idea that when a motivation begins to stir, it should be controlled in the interest of steering toward the right track. When motivation is good, one should embrace it in the same way that one loves beauty. When motivation is evil, one should hate it as one abhors a foul smell. Then motivation will be pure and virtuous and mind will be rectified.

The difference between the doctrines of Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming are plain enough. The earlier philosopher, a pillar of Confucian orthodoxy, stressed the aspect of seeking knowledge with reason. Only after one has acquired much knowledge is it possible to distinguish between right and wrong. But the later philosopher-strategist, Wang Yang-ming, followed Mencius' doctrine of *liang-chih,* in asserting that when one applies *Liang-chih,* that is conscience, to one's motives and will, one knows the difference between right and wrong, and the mind is *ipso facto* rectified.

In Wang's system, emphasis is placed upon the close connection between willing and knowing. Wang wrote:

> When motivation is known to *liang-chih* as good, but when nonetheless one cannot embrace it but turns instead to the contrary, this means that one takes the bad as substitute for the good and is deaf in spite of the dictates of *liang-chih*. On the other hand, when motivation is known to *liang-chih* as bad, but when nonetheless one cannot afford to avoid it but on the contrary puts the bad into practice, this again means that one takes the bad as substitute for the good and is deaf in spite of the dictates of *liang-chih*. *Liang-chih,* of course, knows that it is bad. In these two cases what is called knowing turns out to be ignorance or deception. The proper way to begin is to make the will real or true.

Wang's meaning is that if you act in conformity with *liang-chih,* your will is true. Otherwise, your will is untrue to your conscience.

Wang says further: "When *liang-chih's* dictates are followed, this means that there has been no deceiving of *liang-chih,* and that making true the will has been achieved." It is clear how intimate, for Wang Yang-ming, is the connection between *liang-chih* and volition.

When Wang Yang-ming discusses the theory of knowledge, we find him in full possession of the epistemological problem. The key to his system is the thesis that things are objects of consciousness. As long as we consider entities to exist outside ourselves and to occupy positions in space, the physical world and the mind are

separate and their unity is inconceivable. When, on that memorable night in Lung-ch'ang, Wang made the discovery that so-called things are objects of consciousness, he found a way of linking the mind and its object, thus laying the epistemological foundation for his philosophic system.

Just as Berkeley and Kant wondered how scientific knowledge of the external world is possible, so Wang asked: "How are cognition and a recognition of moral values possible?" It happened that the Chinese philosopher discovered that any knowledge whether of the external world or of moral values, must first exist as consciousness in mind and pass through the process of being thought about in order to become knowledge.

In order to clarify Wang's theory that things are objects of consciousness, consider the following from a letter he wrote to Ku Tung-ch'iao:

> Chu Hsi's exposition of the phrase "investigation of things" is that principles should be studied out of things. If this were so, principles can be found only in things themselves. Then mind would be at one end and the principles of things at the other end. There would be disunity between mind and things. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that Chu Hsi's doctrine that principles are only to be found *within* things is sound, and let us then consider the principle of filial duty. Is this principle to be found in the bodies of your parents or is it to be found in your own mind? If the principle exists in their

bodies, it will disappear after their death. Or let us consider the principle of commiseration. In the case of the child falling into the well, does this principle exist in the child's body or in my mind? Shall I save the child by my hand? Ought I to follow the child to the well? These examples — the principles of filial duty and commiseration — are only two, but any number of other principles may be analyzed in the same way. Thus, to take the view that a disunity obtains between mind and things is to err . . . According to my teaching, 'realization of knowledge' and 'investigation of things' mean that I myself apply my own *liang-chih* to different entities. My *liang-chih* knows what reason is, knows what is right and what is wrong. When I apply my *liang-chih* to different entities, they become adjusted in a proper manner. Application of *liang-chih* to different objects means 'realization of knowledge.' When different things become adjusted in the sense that they function in their proper way, this is the work of the 'investigation of things.'

Here is another relevant comment made by Wang Yang-ming in answer to someone who questioned his doctrine that things are objects of consciousness. Once, when the philosopher was on an excursion to Nan-chen, a friend said: "According to your theory existence is impossible outside of mind. But consider a flower which blooms and withers by itself in a valley. What has it to

do with mind?" Wang replied: "Before you see the flower, both you and the flower are in a state of isolation. When you see the flower its color and shape become clearer to you — which means that knowledge of the flower cannot exist apart from mind."

For Wang Yang-ming the importance of the knowledge which consciousness or mind provides does not lie in its being subjective, but rather in its having metaphysical significance. This is obvious from the following conversation with Chu Pen-su who remarked, "Man is intelligent because he has *liang-chih*" "But," inquired Chu Pen-su, "do plants, stones, and bricks have *liang-chih?*" Wang answered: "Man's *liang-chih* is one with the *liang-chih* of plants and stones. Without man's *liang-chih,* plants and stones would not work as plants and stones. Not only is this the case in regard to plants and stones, but the universe itself would not work save for man's *liang-chih.*"

Wang's last remark tells us clearly that our knowledge of the world is a construct of our minds, a formation brought into being by our process of thinking. In this construction, there is a difference in opinion between Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming. Though the older philosopher, according to Chinese tradition, concerned himself almost exclusively with moral values, nonetheless he took a scientific attitude toward the world, studying nature critically. Moreover, his approach led him to separate mind from the physical world in space. Wang Yang-ming, in the first period of his intellectual development, followed his predecessor, insofar as his

contemplation of bamboo seems to have presupposed this duality between mind and its objects. Later he realized that this method could lead nowhere. After much pondering, during his exile in Lung-ch'ang, he reached the conclusion that since things must come to the mind as objects of consciousness, whither they are constituted by our conceptual forms, it follows that so-called principles exist in our minds, not in the external world. Wang called this remarkable conclusion "the unity of mind and the principles of things."

Some examples of Wang's philosophy of monism show how his ideas are combined in a systematic manner. To be sure, Wang's monism is idealistic in the metaphysical sense; but the term as applied to his doctrine has a wider and more general significance than this somewhat specialized meaning. His interpretations are monistic when he resolves the dualism involved in the following problems: (a) the individual versus the universe, (b) mind versus the physical world, (c) mind versus body, (d) desire versus reason, and (e) knowing versus doing.

(a) *The individual versus the universe.* This problem has already been solved in our discussion of Wang's metaphysics. However, another quotation is worth citing. An inquirer after truth pointed out: "My body as an organ is made of flesh and blood. Thus it is a unit. But such is not the case with the bodies of two persons. The separation between men and animals and plants is even more drastic. How can we say that these are

one?" Wang Yang-ming's reply, is found in his *Answers to Questions Concerning the Book Ta-hsüeh*:

> A great man is one who feels that he belongs to a unity which includes the universe and the different kinds of beings . . . When a man sees a child about to fall into a well he has the instinct of commiseration. This is his sense of human-heartedness, and it is this which makes him and the child one. Still someone may say that man and a child constitute a unity only because they belong to the same species.
>
> However, when a man sees trembling and frightened birds and animals and hears their cries, he has a sense of pity for them. It is this which makes him one with them. Or someone may say that this unity exists only because birds and animals in common with men have feeling and sense. Nevertheless, even when a man beholds falling trees, he knows pity — and it is this which makes him one with plants.
>
> Someone may say again that this unity is derived from the fact that plants, like men, are living organisms. In answer to this we may point out that even when a man sees stones and bricks being broken up, he feels pity. This constitutes his oneness with physical objects. This sense of oneness with the universe is a gift of nature and is conferred by heaven. It is in itself bright and intelligent.

(b) *Mind versus the physical world.* Wang Yang-

ming is not interested in discovering whether knowledge is based on sensation, on forms of understanding, or on both. Such an inquiry has no place in his thought because, as a Chinese, he is primarily concerned with moral values. He believes that reason is constituted by the inborn virtues of *jen* (human-heartedness), *i* (righteousness), *li* (decency), and *chih* (wisdom). These are *forms* of moral judgment or valuation. He believes that reason can be clouded only by desire and selfish motives. As long as mind is kept free of these obscuring agencies, it will be as bright as a mirror and will show correct principles.

Wang stresses the idea that there is no reason outside of mind, since if reason is to be a conscious reality it must pass through mind. This school, identifying mind with reason, opposes the school of knowledge-seeking, that is, the school of Chu Hsi, which emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge from outside. For Wang Yang-ming, reason is inborn with mind and is the foundation of all. When the mind is clear and unselfish there is reason.

(c) *Mind versus body.* It is interesting to examine the way in which Wang described the relation between body and mind. One day the master told a disciple that body, mind, will, knowing, and things were identical. The perplexed pupil asked why this was so. Whereupon Wang Yang-ming gave the following explanation:

> Ears, eyes, mouth, nose, and the four limbs make up the body. If there were no mind, how could the

functions of hearing, seeing, speaking, and moving take place? Suppose that mind wished to hear, see, speak, and move, how could it do so if there were no senses or limbs, that is, if there were no means of exercising these functions? Consequently, no mind, no body; and conversely, no body, no mind. What occupies space is called *body*. The power that controls is named *mind*. Mind operating by motivation is *will*. When will works in an intelligent, clear, and distinct manner, or when its state is that of intelligence, clarity, and distinctness, mind is then said to *know*. That to which will is directed is an *object* or *thing*. These different kinds of mental activity, willing, knowing, objects of consciousness, become one.

Elsewhere Wang expresses the same thought in different form. "Rectification of mind, making the will real, realization of knowledge, investigation of things, all aim at the cultivation of the person." The last of these steps, the investigation of things, covers the whole field of self-discipline which can be worked out in all psychological activities. By "investigation of things" Wang means examination of objects in one's own consciousness; examination of objects to which will is directed and examination of objects being known; "rectification of mind" means correcting the mind in regard to the object of consciousness; to "make will real" means to be true in will with respect to the objects to which volition is directed; "realization of knowledge" is attainment of the knowledge of an object in one's own

consciousness. From the point of view of psychology, according to Wang Yang-ming, between what is inside and what is outside the mind there is no division. Reason is one and the same though it passes through many stages. Where reason is collected it is called *hsing* ("nature"). As the matter of such collectedness reason is called *hsin* ("mind"). When the master operates by directing himself there is will. When the operation is clear and distinct, that is, intelligible, there is knowing or cognition. The target at which the intellectual process aims is an object.

(d) *Desire versus Reason.* For ages Chinese thinkers have assumed a division between human desire and heavenly reason, between the human mind and the mind of Tao. Wang Yang-ming, however, opposed this division and maintained that there is but one mind in the universe. When the human mind is pure and rightly directed it becomes or rather is the mind of Tao. When the human mind is beclouded with personal desire it is not the mind of Tao. With the Ch'eng brothers Wang interpreted "human mind" as desire and the mind of Tao as heavenly reason. Moreover, he held that these two phases of mind are mutually exclusive. Wang's point of view is not peculiarly Chinese; indeed, the common conviction of mankind has been that it is desire which shackles and blinds the mind, making it ignorant. The way to be free of desire is to purify the mind and to attain the mind of Tao.

Discussion of this sort between Wang and his stu-

dents — expositions on various kinds of psychological activity — reveal his monistic point of view and how greatly he was at variance with his predecessor, Chu Hsi, whose thought always proceeded on a dualistic basis: "realization of knowledge" and "investigation of things," "advancement of learning" and "spiritual nurture." Wang's method of overcoming dualism is clear. A pupil of Wang's cited the following words of Chu Hsi: "The master-key to a man's learning is mind and reason." He then asked Wang what he thought of this statement, and Wang replied: "The conjunction *and* is a mark of Chu Hsi's theory of bifurcation." Thus, Wang Yang-ming opposed dualism even in such a small detail as the use of the conjunction *and*. He realized that Chu Hsi's use of *and* implied that these two things were separate, and therefore irreducible to unity. Wang held precisely the opposite view.

The philosopher-strategist's attack on the Chu school is illustrated in another conversation. One of his disciples quoted Chu Hsi's teacher, Li Tung (or Li Yen-p'ing), "in conformity with reason and unselfish," and asked Wang, "How can one make a distinction between the two phrases: "in conformity with reason" and "unselfish"? Wang replied: "Mind is reason. If it is unselfish it is in conformity with reason. Not to be in conformity with reason is to be selfish. So there should be no disunity between mind and reason."

In short, Wang Yang-ming's philosophy is a reaction against Chu Hsi's dualistic philosophy.

(e) *Knowing versus doing.* The theory of the unity of knowing and doing does not necessarily have anything to do with monism. It has a value in its own right, and a thinker who opposes the doctrine of monism may still subscribe to it. First advocated by Wang during his exile, the theory was later reframed in the formula "realization of *liang-chih*," which expresses the same idea in a more direct way. Wang's conversation with his disciple Hsu Ai has been set forth in the biographical sketch. A section from a letter to Ku Tung-ch'iao, which forms a part of the book *Records of Instructions and Practices,* treats of the same subject in somewhat different form. In this work, the correspondent Ku states:

> You advocate in your letter a parallelism between knowing and doing without giving priority to one or to the other. In this your meaning is the same as that of the chapter upon the supremacy of moral virtue and seeking after knowledge in the *Chung-yung* (Doctrine of the Golden Mean), where virtue and knowledge are represented as interpenetrating each other. Yet there must be some order in which the steps are to be taken. You must know how to eat before you can eat. You must know how to drink before you can drink. You must know about clothes before you can dress yourself. You must first know about roads, then you can walk. You must first know things and then you can act. I do not mean to say that I should *know* today and then *do* tomorrow.

This passage, which obviously contains implied cri-

ticism of Wang's doctrine of the unity of knowing and doing, elicited the following reply from the master:

> You admit the parallel way and mutual interpenetration, yet you make mention of a proper order of steps to be taken. Herein you show a conflict in your mind. Let me take your example of eating and explain that to you. You are laboring under the customary way of thinking. In my view, one must first have the intention of eating and then knowing how to eat will follow. This intention to eat is will, which is the beginning of doing. The taste of food is knowable only after it has been placed in the mouth. How can you possibly know whether something is tasteful or not until you have tasted it? Similarly, there must be the intention to walk, first, then knowledge of roads will follow. The intention to walk is will which is the beginning of doing. After you have plodded on some distance you will know whether the road is safe or not. How can you possibly know the character of the road until you have walked it? This same type of analysis is applicable to drinking and dressing. Your argument only amounts to what you say it is, namely: "you must first know things and then you can act."

Ku Tung-ch'iao was not yet satisfied with his master's elucidation.

> Real knowing is for the sake of doing. Without do-

ing, there is no knowing. As a piece of advice to students that they should know the importance of putting knowledge into practice, your *dicta* are sound. If, however, you mean to say that doing *is* knowing, I fear that this superabundant emphasis on mind must lead to overlooking the principles in things and to incompleteness of knowledge. And such an interpretation is contrary to the theory of the unity of knowing and doing as entertained by the Confucian school.

Then Wang Yang-ming presented his second rebuttal:

What is true, intimate, serious, and substantial within knowing is doing. What is intelligent, alert, analytic, and discriminating within doing is knowing. *Knowing and doing according to their original nature are inseparable from one another.* In these later days they have become disconnected because they have lost their primal significance. Therefore, I advocate the parallel ways of knowing and doing, which means that true knowing constitutes doing and that without doing there is no knowing. This may be proved by the example of eating, as discussed by us previously. Of course, this is advice for students. But the advice is such in the original sense of the terms 'knowing' and 'doing.' It is not mere fabrication on my part in order to get immediate results. In your letter you said that overabundant emphasis on mind would lead to overlooking the principles in

things. In my view, however, the principles in things cannot be found outside of mind. The attempt to find the principles in things outside of mind issues in one result only, namely, finding no principles. On the other hand, if you advocate putting aside the principles in things in order to find mind, then I do not know what remains to constitute mind. . . .

The intrinsic quality of mind is nature, which is nothing other than reason. When one possesses a mind exhibiting love to one's parents, there also is the principle of love. Otherwise if there were no such mind the principle of love would be non-existent. When one possesses a mind showing loyalty to the king, there also is the principle of loyalty. Otherwise, such a mind not being there would entail the non-existence of the principle of loyalty. Thus, reason or principle cannot be found apart from mind.

Chu Hsi's formulation was that the key to a man's learning is mind *and* reason. According to my view, though one's mind is confined to one's self, it is nonetheless the key to all principles. Principles are distributed throughout all things in the universe, yet they are comprised in one's mind. Chu Hsi's formula bifurcates mind and reason as is shown by his use of the little word 'and'. . . .

The search for reason conceived as being apart from mind leads to incomplete knowledge. In olden times Kao-tzu taught that *i* (righteousness) can only be found externally. (Kao-tzu's doctrine was an anci-

ent version of the theory of the externality of relations.) Mencius then proceeded to criticize him, saying that Kao-tzu did not understand the nature of righteousness. Mind is one. It is *jen* when it shows true commiseration. It is *i* when it exhibits honor and rectitude. It is *li* (reason) when it reveals tracings or lines in systematic arrangement. If human-heartedness and righteousness cannot be found outside mind, how can reason be found there? The expectation to find reason outside mind is based upon the assumption that knowledge is separate from action. If, on the other hand, you seek reason in your own mind this will lead you to perceive the unity of knowledge and action, the oneness of knowing and doing which is the true way of the Confucian school.

Wang Yang-ming tried to apply his doctrine that mind *is* reason to every aspect of his philosophy. But Ku Tung-ch'iao was so bound up in the conventional way of thinking that he was utterly blind to the possibility of synthesizing knowing with doing. Ku could do no more than remember the five steps in the *Chung-yung* (Book of the Golden Mean): (a) study widely, (b) question carefully, (c) think thoroughly, (d) analyze clearly, (e) put into practice earnestly. And in his correspondence with Wang, he quoted the first four steps but omitted the fifth, that which has to do with doing or action. His reason for this omission was, of course, that from his point of view practice belongs to action

and as such is irrelevant to the process of knowing. In a letter to Wang, Ku wrote:

> The mind of man is originally distinct and clear. Nonetheless, it is sometimes beclouded and blind because it is imprisoned in the physical world and is enthralled by human desires. The steps — studying, question, thinking, and analysing — are necessarily preparatory to the clear understanding of reason, with which comprehension comes the discovery of good and bad, true and false.

To this comment, which implied a criticism of Wang's teaching, the philosopher-strategist made the following reply:

> Questioning, thinking, analysing and putting into practice are all necessary to the pursuance of study. Without practice there can be no study. If one is to learn the duties of filial piety one must know how to serve one's parents, and the only way to gain this knowledge is to do the labor oneself. Filial piety cannot be learnt by mere talk. Again, if one wishes to learn archery one must have a bow in one's hand, and one must actually shoot an arrow to hit the mark. Or if one wants to learn calligraphy, one must have paper on the table, one must hold a brush and dip it into the inkstone. Whatsoever the nature of the learning, one cannot acquire it without somehow combining it with practice. Therefore, the initiative

of learning is practice or doing. Such is the meaning of the dictum: "Put into practice earnestly." . . .

Why does learning include these steps? During the process of learning one has doubts. Hence one questions. Questioning, then, is a phase of learning and practice. But going along with questioning is thinking. Thinking, thus, is also a phase of learning and practice. After questioning one will analyse. Hence, analysing is a phase of learning and practice. Whether one questions, thinks, or analyses, one works ceaselessly with the subject. This is to "put into practice earnestly." The point is not that practice comes after these three steps. To gain knowledge of a profession is called 'to learn.' To raise a doubt for the purpose of solving it is called 'to question.' To understand thoroughly is called 'to think.' To make fine distinctions is called 'to analyse.' To reach what is actual is called 'to practice.' Although these steps are divided into five, they may also be regarded collectively, in which case they constitute one and the same step. In short, my doctrine is: *Mind is identical with reason,* or: *The unity of knowing and doing.*

Wang's theory of realization of *liang-chih,* is another formulation of the principle that knowing and doing are one. He proposes that the term "realization" be understood as including the sense of "carrying out," so that the term covers "doing." In Wang's words:

Liang-chih is the compass, the square, and the measure. All things have their individual details, items, contingencies, and changes — just as there are all kinds of circles, squares, and lengths, which are testable by the compass, the square, and the measure. The details, items, contingencies, and changes cannot themselves be standardized, precisely as the inexhaustible variety of circles, squares, and lengths cannot themselves be standardized. But let the compass and the square once be established, then all kinds of geometrical figures will be testable, and you can have as many kinds as you like. Let the measure once be established, then you will no more be deceived by the multitude of different lengths, and you can have as many varieties of longness and shortness as you wish. Similarly, let *liang-chih* be established, and you will no more feel uneasy among the vast throng of details, items, contingencies, and changes. You will be equipped to receive as many kinds as you please. A proverb says: "A difference of one millimeter may make a difference of 1,000 miles." On the basis of the subtle stirrings of *liang-chih,* one can discover whether one is headed towards the right or the wrong, and it is in paying heed to these small warnings that one should be most strict with one's self. On the contrary, if one wishes, as it were, to test a circle or a parallelogram without making use of compasses or a T-square, or if one wishes to determine a length without a measure, one is free to do so, but the results will be nonsense.

Still speaking of intuition or conscience, Wang Yang-ming said:

> *Liang-chih* is a bright mirror in which all images are reflected. Beauty and ugliness will be seen in it and, after appearing, each will pass. Thus the mirror is forever luminous and shining. The advice derived from Buddhism that mind should be developed without any attachments is in itself sound, for the fact that all images, whether beautiful or ugly, are indiscriminately reflected in the mirror of the mind is in accordance with the proper development of the mind, and the fact that every image, whether beautiful or ugly, after being reflected does not remain is a sign of non-attachment.

Such, for Wang Yang-ming, is the nature of *liang-chih,* which is conscious, bright, just, and objective. If one can keep *liang-chih* in its pristine condition, it will be a compass and a measure in all emergencies, for it is the storehouse of heavenly reason.

Our philosopher-strategist, after his bitter experience in exile, came to the conclusion that the only proper way to conduct one's life is to follow *liang-chih,* a formula which he discovered at the age of fifty. There is a record in Wang's biography:

> After Emperor Wu-tsung returned to Peking, and after the intrigues of Chang Chung and Hsu T'ai, I discovered at last that *liang-chih* is the fundamental

factor that makes one risk anything, even unto death. *Liang-chih* is a criterion by which one may dare to testify before the Three Emperors, heaven and earth, the deities, and the Sages of generations to come.

In a letter to Ch'u Shou-i in the same year, Wang Yang-ming wrote:

Recently I discovered that realization of *liang-chih* is the true essence of Confucianism. Formerly I had hesitations on this point, but after many years of bitter experience I have reached the conclusion that *liang-chih* is that which is self-sufficient in ourselves. It is like the helm on a boat whereby one can steer one's course in calm water or in rapids. When one holds the helm one is equipped to guide one's bark to safety and to avoid sinking.

A disciple of Wang, Ch'en Chiu-ch'uan, remarked on hearing the master sigh, "Why do you sigh like that?" Wang replied: "This idea (the fundamental character of *liang-chih*) is so simple, yet it was buried for so many ages!"

The disciple Ch'en continued: "Because the Sung philosophers were busy with their methods of knowledge-seeking, they achieved great erudition, but they also became more and more biased. Now that you, master, have discovered *liang-chih* you have unfolded the truth for mankind." Wang, the master, added:

It is just like a man who claims to be the descendant of a family after many years' separation. The question can only be settled by a blood test, which will determine the actual relationship between the man and his alleged ancestors. I believe that *liang-chih* is the drop of blood which determines the descendants of the Confucian school.

How much importance Wang Yang-ming attached to the doctrine of *liang-chih* is shown by the passage just quoted. Yet he feared that the idea might become crystallized in a catchword and so lose its usefulness for the people. In this anxiety he showed himself to be remarkably far-sighted, for after his death the formula *liang-chih* was, in fact, instrumental in discrediting his philosophy toward the end of the Ming dynasty.

III

THE POSITION OF WANG IN NEO-CONFUCIANISM

Wang Yang-ming rose to prominence in a period when the dualistic philosophy of Chu Hsi was at its height. Wang's philosophy took a form which in Western terminology is known as Idealistic Monism. Wang Yang-ming's philosophical system, the climax of Neo-Confucianism, is a clear, thorough, and definite attempt to explain the universe as a unity. His philosophical ideas are recorded in dialogue form in the book *Chuan-Hsi Lu.*

In order to arrive at an understanding of the various subjects discussed in *Chuan-Hsi Lu,* it is necessary to comprehend Wang Yang-ming's system of philosophy and to recognize Wang's position in the Neo-Confucian movement. In this endeavor, the following questions will be considered: What was Neo-Confucianism? Who was its founder? How does the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming differ from that of the main proponents of Neo-Confucianism? What was Wang's own system? What were its later developments?

Neo-Confucianism was a revival of the teachings of Confucius in refutation of the philosophy of Buddhism.

In a period of turmoil and unrest, beginning with the Three Kingdoms and including the Southern and Northern dynasties (220-588 A.D.), but excluding a time of unification (265-317) under the dynasty of Western Tsin, the Chinese intellectual class showed an inclination toward religion. Taoism and Buddhism, introduced from India, were the most popular, although Confucianism was not neglected. Most of the Sutras had been translated and edited into 3,000 books which form the present Buddhist Tripitaka.

Following the reunification of China under the Sui and T'ang dynasties, a number of intellectuals attempted to oppose the growing influence of Buddhistic thought. Han-Yü (768-824), a literary man of the T'ang dynasty, is credited with giving impetus to the Neo-Confucian movement with his essay "Yuan Tao," an inquiry into Tao in defense of the old Chinese tradition and in refutation of Lao Tzu and Buddhism. In remonstrance to the Emperor Hsien-Tsung, Han-Yü also advised against the ritual greeting of Buddhist relics. Han-Yü upheld the Confucian doctrine of the five-fold human relationships against the renunciation of human relationships advocated by the Buddha and Lao Tzu. Han-Yü's philosophy, in confirming the necessity for loyalty to personal relationships and the recognition of human needs, was thus more realistic than philosophical. His arguments, in comparison to the highly speculative arguments advanced by Buddhism and Taoism, were rather simple and naive. But Tao was

later developed as a fundamental concept of Neo-Confucianism.

Chang-Chieh and Li Ao (died ca. 844), two followers of Han-Yü, made a thorough study of Tao. Chang-Chieh advised Han-Yü to devote himself to its study, and Li Ao wrote three essays on the return to human nature. These essays may be said to be the foundation of Neo-Confucianism. Terms such as truth, enlightenment, emptiness, calmness, the idea of becoming a sage, and the value of watchfulness in time of solitude were discussed extensively in the writings of Li Ao. Li Ao took these terms from "Chung Yung" and "Ta Hsüeh," chapters of the book *Li-Chi.* In the Sung dynasty, these terms were part and parcel of the philosophy of the Neo-Confucianists; the two chapters were included in the series of *Four Books.*

Neo-Confucianism, as a revival movement, would not have begun without the stimulus of Buddhism. The introduction of Buddhism from India led Chinese scholars to an awareness that they must have their own theories, their own system of philosophy, their *Weltanschauung,* if they were to prevent the spread of Buddhism in China. For this purpose, they realized, intellectual thought must be active, original, and able to convince the Chinese people of what is theoretically and morally right.

Among the various schools of Buddhism existing in China during the period of division of the Southern and Northern dynasties, the school of Ch'anism (Zen) exerted the strongest influence. Bodhidharma founded

this school and gave the following message to the Chinese: "Ch'anism is an esoteric teaching without any basis in written texts. Its only target is the mind. The enlightenment of what is nature leads to Buddahood." Bodhidharma taught his disciples to read the Sutra, *Lankavatara*. Particular stress was placed on meditation which would lead to enlightenment of the mind; according to records, for many years Bodhidharma sat before a wall to meditate. Hui-neng (638-713), the Sixth Patriarch of this school, was largely responsible for the vigor of this discipline at a time when other Buddhist schools had disappeared or were in process of gradual decline.

Ch'anism is also known as the School of the Mind because it posits the mind as the determinant of all things — whether one behaves rightly or wrongly, whether a thing is good or bad, whether one affirms or denies, whether the world is considered a void or a reality. Effort is made to make the mind the master of all things. In the essay "Hsin Wang-ming," Mind as Master, one finds: "Mind is Buddha, Buddha is mind; apart from mind there is no Buddha; apart from Buddha there is no mind."

Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Ch'anism, in his own Sutra wrote:

> The capacity of the mind is so vast that it is like the Void. It has no sides, it is neither square nor round, neither great nor small. Nor has it color; blue, yellow, red or white. Nor has it an upper or a lower

part. Nor is it long or short. There should be no liking or disliking. There should be no right nor wrong. Men of noble knowledge, your nature contains all *Dharmas*. All *Dharmas* are in your nature. Don't take the side of either good or bad, don't detach yourselves from them; don't attach yourselves to them. Then the Mind is empty and it is great.

Shuen-Hsiu wrote the following stanza: "All *Dharmas* are innate in the Mind. If one seeks *Dharmas* elsewhere, it is like a person leaving his own father and seeking him elsewhere."

The School of the Mind had three axioms akin to the philosophy of Mencius. (1) The mind is a focus; this is closely related to the words of Mencius: the function of the mind is to think; (2) The Ch'an school believed that everyone possessed the nature of Buddhahood. Mencius said that everyone can become a *Yao* or a *Shun* (the ancient sages); (3) The belief in the goodness of human nature; this is Mencius' fundamental idea. These similarities were largely responsible for the awakening of Chinese scholars to the benefits of the new movement. Chinese scholars were only reluctantly willing to admit that they had benefited from Buddhism; nonetheless, it was the influence of Buddhism that called forth originality and new boldness in thinking, in building the system of Neo-Confucianism and in presenting its arguments. Ch'anism was thus responsible for the emphasis on Mind as the source of activity. The basis of new theories doubtlessly remained Confucianism.

Liu Tsun-yuan (773-819), a literary man of the T'ang dynasty, second only to Han-Yü, pointed out the connection between the school of Ch'anism and Neo-Confucianism. He was the author of an inscription placed upon the tomb of Hui-neng, saying that Hui-neng's philosophy began and ended with the belief in the goodness of human nature. This seems to be open recognition of the relationship existing between Buddhism and the Chinese tradition, and as such worth remarking.

Cheng Hao (1032-1085) can be called one of the founding fathers of Neo-Confucianism for his postulation of the concept of reason during the Sung dynasty. He said: "When I found that there is reason in every thing and event, I was so happy that I could not help swinging my hands and dancing with my feet." In this period Confucianism was also called *Li-Hsüeh,* the philosophy of reason. There is a correlation between Cheng Hao's announcement of the position of reason in philosophic thought and the birth of so-called modern philosophy in the Western world, which also has as its starting-point the concept of reason or *cognito.*

Because Chinese scholars were concerned with the establishment of standards of moral judgments, they developed the concepts of *Jen, I, Li* and *Chi,* the four standards or forms of moral law. The first three terms mean benevolence, righteousness, and decency, respectively; *Chi* means knowledge with which one is able to differentiate right from wrong, one thing from another. This is in relation to the objects of the physical world. The functions of *Chi* most nearly resemble the Western

equivalent, functions of intellect or knowledge. These terms fall into two classes, *Jen, I,* and *Li* as practical reason, *Chi* as pure reason.

After Cheng Hao revealed that reason was the source of knowledge and evaluation, his brother Cheng I (1033-1107) formulated the dictum: "Human nature is reason." It was his theory that *Jen, I, Li* and *Chi* are ideas innate in human nature. (Note that he does not say they are in the mind.) Cheng I believed that the mind, as an organ of consciousness, was only responsible for thought, whereas the four forms stem from a source much higher than thought. Mencius was the first to hold that the four forms of moral law are inborn in human nature. He wrote:

> When I say that all men have a mind which cannot bear to see the suffering of others, my meaning may be illustrated thus: Even nowadays, if men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they will without exception experience a feeling of alarm and distress. They will feel so, not as a ground on which they may seek the praise of their neighbors and friends, nor from a dislike for the reputation of having been unmoved by such a thing.
>
> From this case we may perceive that the feeling of commiseration is essential to man, that the feeling of shame and dislike is essential to man, that the feeling of modesty and complaisance is essential to man, and that the feeling of approving and disapproving is essential to man.

> The feeling of commiseration is the principle of benevolence. The feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness. The feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of propriety. The feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge.

This quotation from Mencius is the source of the formulation originated by Cheng I. He reasoned that these four forms in human nature were on a transcendental level, while mind, the organ of consciousness, was on a natural level. Mencius did not make this distinction.

Somewhat later, in the period of the Southern Sung dynasty, Lu Chiu-yüan (1139-1193), a contemporary of Chu Hsi, formulated the dictum "Mind is reason," which was opposed by Chu Hsi. He accused Lu of having allowed himself to be corrupted by the doctrines of Buddhism or Ch'anism. In Lu's time Ch'anism was extremely powerful, so possibly it did have some influence on the thinking of Lu. It is also true to say that Lu's formulation was based on a text by Mencius, made more vivid to Lu through his study of Ch'anism. Of more interest to us, however, is the fact that Wang Yang-ming later adopted this formula and made it the fundamental concept of his own philosophy.

Wang was not satisfied to accept the principle "Mind is reason" without going a step further in an attempt to solve the problem of whether mind and things are separate or identical. It took him many years

before he felt certain that things can be known when they are conscious in the mind. He concluded that things and mind are identical; mind and reason, which is hidden in everything, can be identified. From this he inferred other theories: unity of knowing and doing, realization of the *liang-chih.*

How closely Wang is related to the Lu school can be seen from Wang's Preface to the collected works of Lu (see Appendix for the complete version):

> The science of sagehood is the science of mind. What was transmitted from Yao and Shun to Yu lay in the words. "The mind of man is full of danger; the mind of Tao is subtle. Be proficient and unitive. Hold the mean firmly." This was the source of the science of mind. What was called 'the mean' was the mind of *Tao.* When the mind of *Tao* exists, in its proficiency and unity, it is *Jen,* which is also the mean.
>
> The work of Confucius and Mencius was to devote the self to *Jen,* which in turn was derived from the transmitted message about proficiency and unity. In later ages there grew up the belief that the objects of one's seeking should be on the outside rather than the inside. Therefore, even a disciple of Confucius, Tzu-kung, thought that the work of his master consisted of wide reading and memorizing and that *Jen* became a matter of giving more alms to more people. Tzu-kung's mistake was corrected by Confucius in his remark that what he sought was a

pervading unity, and that the exercise of *Jen* should begin with one's self. The meaning of this remark was simply that endeavor should begin with one's own mind.

Many people disliked Lu Chiu-yüan because of his difference of opinion with Chu Hsi. The former philosopher was condemned as a follower of Ch'an, as a Buddhist who disregarded human relationships and the principles of the phenomenal world, and whose attitude towards life, therefore, was negative. If the doctrine of Lu Chiu-yüan had really been negative, then it would have been justly condemned as of the Ch'an school. But the works of the Ch'an school and of Lu Chiu-yüan are still in existence and it is easy to compare the one with the other. Similarity and difference between them may be readily seen by anyone who looks, without having to spend much effort in research.

Here Wang defended Lu by saying that Lu's philosophy was based on the tradition of the ancient sages, especially Mencius, and had nothing in common with the school of Ch'an. For this reason Wang and Lu are often classified as belonging to the same school.

Some major distinctions between the Cheng-Chu school and the Lu-Wang should be mentioned for a better understanding of Wang's system. The polemic between the Cheng-Chu school and the Lu-Wang school resembles that between the empiricist and rationalist schools of the West. However, the theory of

sensations did not rise in China. It appeared in another form: whether the mind is sufficient to itself or must learn from sources outside itself, is the point in dispute.

Wang believed that intelligibility was the core of the universe, with man's mind, or intuitive knowledge, at its center. He said:

> Mind means nothing but intelligence. What fills the whole world is intelligibility. As man is made of a physical body and a spirit, he is intercepted and isolated as a unit from the whole. Intelligence is the master of the universe and of spirits. Without intelligence how can the height of the heavens be surveyed? Without intelligence how can the profundity of the earth be studied? Without intelligence how can fortune and misfortune be revealed by spirits? If heaven, earth, spirits, and the manifold things were separated from intelligence, all of them would lose their existence. If my intelligence were separated from the universe, spirits, and the manifold things, it would lose its existence, too. This is why I say that they (my intelligence, spirits, and the manifold things) together constitute an integration, from which none can be divorced.

Thus it is clear Wang holds that reality consists of consciousness. His way of reducing the universe to a unity can be seen in the following sentence: "Reason is the order of Ch'i; Ch'i is that with which mind operates."

Chu Hsi, on the other hand, is a dualist. For him, the world is divided into two: the internal which is to know; and the external, the manifold things. His supplementary chapter to the *Great Learning* includes the following passage:

> The meaning of the expression: "The perfecting of knowledge depends on the investigation of things," is this: If we wish to carry our knowledge to the utmost, we must investigate the principles of all things we come into contact with, for the intelligent mind of man is certainly formed to know, and there is not a single thing in which its principles do not inhere. So long as all principles are not investigated, man's knowledge is incomplete.

From the statement "We must investigate the principles of all things," can be drawn the inference that Chu Hsi sees a multiplicity of things in the natural world which may be divided into men, animals, plants, minerals, and so forth. Chu Hsi found it impossible to reduce the whole world to a monistic unity; like his predecessor, Cheng I, he advanced the theory that there are two primordial things in this world: *li,* reason, an immaterial cosmic principle, and *Ch'i,* ether or matter, which denotes material objects. All things have a bodily form which is the condensation of *Ch'i.* Like any other objects, man is composed of both *li* (reason) and *Ch'i. Li* (reason) is inherent in all men and all things, but it is *Ch'i* in its varying proportions that makes men and

things differ from one another. As there are many things in the world, their principles must be studied one by one. This is "Investigation of Things."

According to Chu Hsi, mind and matter, mind and reason, the cultivation of mind and the investigation of things fall into two distinct fields. For this reason Chu Hsi's philosophy is considered dualistic.

In pedagogy, Chu Hsi advocated that such elementary principles as service to parents and brothers should be taught first. If the premise "Mind is reason" were given as the first lesson, students would find its speculative nature too difficult to grasp and thus might give up studying altogether. The simpler principles should be taught before the more profound are offered for consideration.

Chu Hsi also said that mind consists of two parts: mind of Tao and mind of man. In order to cultivate the mind of Tao, desires of the senses should be kept from the mind of man. In both metaphysics and pedagogy, Chu Hsi exhibits his dualistic tendency.

The controversy between the Cheng-Chu school and the Lu-Wang school began in the Sung dynasty and continued into the Ch'ing dynasty. Each school quotes from Confucius, Mencius, and the *Five Classics* in its own defense, while refuting the beliefs of the other. Indeed, to this philosophical problem no verdict has been given, as in the case of the controversy between rationalism and empiricism.

Wang's school was most powerful during the Ming

dynasty. His followers were found in many provinces of China. According to the *Ming Shu Hsüeh An,* the philosophical records of the Ming scholars, eight separate groups of the school existed: the Chekiang; the Kiangsi; the Kiangsu and Anhwei; the Hupeh and Hunan; the North China; the Kwangtung and Fukien; the Li Tsai who rebelled; and the Taichou. Among these groups the Chekiang, the Kiangsi, and the Taichou were the most active. Following a brief survey of the characteristics of these three groups of the Wang school, we shall give a summary of the development of Wang's theory and the Testimony of Tao on the heavenly fountain bridge, since these factors brought about the split in the Wang school following his death.

Chien Te-hung has said that Wang Yang-ming's philosophical teachings can be seen to fall into three stages: first, during his exile in Lung-ch'ang he announced the principle that mind is reason and stressed the unity of knowing and doing; second, during his stay in Hsu-Chow, he declared the efficacy of meditation and recommended meditation to his students; third, in the year 1516, he simplified his ways of teaching and wrote the formula: "realization of *liang-chih* is intuitive knowledge." For Wang, *liang-chih* was the only reality, the Thing that mattered. *Liang-chih* often seems to be a sudden enlightenment; it is that quality which enables one, whether the mind is occupied or not, to distinguish between light and darkness, right and wrong. By keeping a careful watch on one's mind, one will attain the right path. This is the "investigation

of things," on which Wang lays so much stress in his philosophy.

Each of the branches of the Lu-Wang school interpreted *liang-chih* in its own way. An essay written by Wang Ch'i shows how many and varied these interpretations were:

> Some said: *liang-chih* should remain in calmness and should not be busy about show. Others said: there is no ready-made *liang-chih; liang-chih* needs cultivation just as gold ore needs melting, purifying and beating. Some said: *liang-chih* is attained only by practice. It cannot be found otherwise. Some said: *liang-chih* has its essence and its operation.

Inevitably, these contradictory interpretations caused confusion in the minds of scholars and a split in the school ensued.

A conversation between two members of the Chekiang school, Chien Te-hung and Wang Ch'i, is further proof of the varying interpretations of Wang's theory. A discussion of the testimony of Tao on the Heavenly-Fountain Bridge includes pronouncement of the "Four Beings":

1. The reality of mind or mind *per se* is beyond good and evil.
2. What is stirred up in the will, may be either good or evil.
3. To know what is good or evil is the function of *liang-chih*.

4. To do what is good and to eliminate what is evil is the work of the investigation of things.

These four statements are known as the *Four Beings* because they presuppose the existence of good and evil. However, in Wang Ch'i's opinion, they do not represent the ultimate truth. Wang Ch'i, in conversation with Chien Te-hung, said: "If mind *per se* is beyond good and evil, then will is also beyond good and evil, so is knowledge and so are all things. As long as you assert that there is good and evil in the will, there must be good and evil in the mind too." Wang Ch'i's formula was known as the *Four Nothingnesses* because the four entities — mind, will, knowledge, and things — were conceived as beyond good and evil. Wang Ch'i disagreed with Chien Te-hung in the last three premises.

The two disciples brought their discussion before Wang and asked his verdict about ultimate truth. Wang Yang-ming answered that there were two approaches to ultimate truth: the *Four Nothingnesses* were for the talented while the *Four Beings* were for the average person. At the end of their conversation, Wang Yang-ming repeated the *Four Beings,* saying that mind, will, knowledge, and things must be examined in the light of good and evil.

Those who formed the Kiang-si school emphasized the need for vigilance of the mind and a mood of calm. Huang Tsung-hsi, author of *Ming Shu Hsüeh An* argued that since Wang Yang-ming spent much of his time in Kiang-si his pupils there had a more profound un-

derstanding of his philosophy than did those who belonged to other schools.

The Taichou school, led by Wang Ken, was allied with Wang Ch'i in an approach which claimed a direct joy and a sudden enlightenment of Tao. This school had its own formula, called "Investigation of Things of *Hwai-nan,*" the latter a part of Kiang-su. The members of the Taichou school were ostensibly converted by Wang Yang-ming to the theory of realization of *liang-chih,* although they did not as a result abandon their own theories.

Of the leaders of the three schools, Wang Ch'i was longest-lived; he died at the age of eighty-five. An advocate of the *Four Nothingnesses* in his conversation and writings, he exerted a profound influence in academic circles. But his opponents spoke of his theories as "mad Ch'anism," because Wang Ch'i's metaphysic of the reality of mind or mind *per se* had no reliable data to support it. His speculations, like those of Wang Ken, that mind should be natural and under no control were held responsible for the corruption of the Wang school.

At the end of the Ming dynasty, the Tung Ling school was begun with the object of attacking the Wang school. It laid stress on the control of the mind and the acquisition of more and more knowledge. Ku Yen-wu challenged the Wang school and described Wang's philosophy as "empty talk." The times demanded a positive way of study. The decline of Wang Yang-ming's school began because there were two rivals to his teachings. First, the Han scholarship, a philological study

of the classics, based upon criticism of the original texts. More specifically, the Han scholars endeavored to find a correct explanation for each word, each term, and each object. Second, a return to the doctrines of Chu Hsi, whose philosophy was dualistic.

Thus during the Ch'ing dynasty, and with the exception of a few scholars who attempted to reinterpret Wang's philosophy, Wang Yang-ming's teachings were nearly forgotten. However, Wang's philosophy had been received with more respect in Japan. Some participants in the Meiji Reform were students of the Wang school. The practicality and effectiveness of Wang's thought in Japan induced the Chinese to reevaluate the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming. It seems now that a revival of Wang's philosophy in the Far East is certain to occur.

IV

WANG'S PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUES

The complete collected works of Wang Yang-ming consist of thirty-eight books. *Chuan-Hsi Lu* occupies the first three books. The other books contain letters, essays, "memorials" to emperors, and documents to officials. The discussion of "Mind is reason" and "Realization of *Liang-chih*" forms the central theme of *Chuan-Hsi Lu*. One notes particularly the conciseness and lucidity with which Wang presents his theories.

Wang's system is not easily understood by the modern reader because no attempt has been made at systematic presentation under such headings as metaphysics, ethics, or psychology. Nonetheless, the necessary premises of the theoretical system are amply supplied by Wang himself. An attempt has been made to put the premises in proper order in the section on his system of philosophy.

The three books may be divided into two sections: the first records his early discoveries, including the formula "Mind is reason"; the second concentrates upon the realization of *liang-chih*.

The first book is devoted to the theme "Mind is

reason" and the principle of the unity of knowing and acting. Stress is placed on the theory that all things in the world are objects of consciousness. In this volume Wang also answered many questions raised by his students concerning books, historical studies, and Chinese tradition, answering each according to his own system of philosophy.

The second volume consists of Wang's letters to his friends and disciples. These letters were written after the development of the formulas "Mind is reason" and "Realization of *Liang-chih*." Each letter is divided into sections, each section preceded by a question or questions inserted by the editor as explanatory headings. This volume contains elaborate explanations of Wang's system of philosophy.

The third volume presents conversations carried on in the light of Wang's realization of *liang-chih*. During the years of his military campaign *liang-chih* was the only criterion of human conduct. He went so far as to say: "Man's intuitive knowledge is shared by grass, trees, stones, and tiles. Grass, trees, stones, and tiles cannot function if they do not possess the function to know. The universe itself would be incapable of running or operating if it were not for man's intuitive knowledge." He reiterated his theory that intelligibility exists as the core of the universe. He went a step further and said that there was an ultimate reality beyond the language of expression and beyond good and evil. The conversation on the Heavenly Bridge was formulated according to this conviction.

Chuan-Hsi Lu has had many editors. The first volume is divided into three parts, recorded by Hsu Ai, Lu Chen, and Hsi K'an, respectively. Hsu Ai was Wang's favorite student and married Wang's sister, but died at the age of thirty-one. Lu Chen then took up the work of recording Wang's conversations at the suggestion of Wang himself. Hsi K'an continued this procedure when Lu Chen ceased this practice.

Wang's letters to his friends, which make up the second volume, were copied by Nan Tai-chi. Wang conferred the degree of Master of Arts upon the young man, and he later obtained the position of prefect in Wang Yang-ming's native prefecture. A story is told of how Nan complained to his master for not having pointed out his mistakes as a prefect. Wang replied, "I have been doing so all along." When Nan denied this was so, Wang asked, "If I have not told you, how do you know you have made mistakes?" Nan said, "I know it because of my conscience or *liang-chih*." Wang said, "Isn't *liang-chih* a principle I have been telling you about every day?"

The third volume was recorded by several of his other students and edited by Chien Te-hung. It was first printed in the province of Hupeh under the title *A Supplementary Record of Instructions and Practices.* After Wang Yang-ming's death, Chien Te-hung asked Wang's disciples to collect for him all the papers they could find of Wang's conversations and writings. With these new findings, he revised the supplementary record as it is today; Chien Te-hung's purpose in editing this

volume was to clarify Wang's system by deleting those sayings which seemed contradictory.

The first edition of *Chuan-Hsi Lu,* printed in 1518, consisted of the three parts recorded by Hsu Ai, Lu Chen, and Hsi K'an. When the second edition was printed by Nan Tai-chi in 1523 in Chekiang, two additional volumes were added. The book in its present form, edited by Chien Te-hung, appeared in 1552, about thirty years after the death of Wang Yang-ming. It consists of three volumes: the records of Hsu, Lu, and Hsi, as the first volume; the letters as the second volume; and the revised version of the *Supplementary Record of Instructions and Practices,* as the third volume.

A well-known saying attributed to the Emperor Yu and found in the *Shu-Ching* is as follows: "The mind of man is dangerous, and the mind of *Tao* is subtle. Be proficient, follow the unitive way, hold on to the proper mean." Whether this is truly the advice of Emperor Yu is doubtful; nevertheless, it shows that the idealist tradition has its roots in ancient times. Confucius is accredited with the saying, "I reflect three times daily." It is clear the reflection can only take place by assuming the presence of mind. Mencius' saying that the function of the mind is to think also indicates that he recognized the importance of the mind. Since the establishment of the Neo-Confucianist movement, the position has taken root that mind is the one foundation upon which a view of the universe can be erected. This is the result of the influence of Wang Yang-ming, who was

the first writer in China to place emphasis on the mind as the basis for an idealistic-monistic system of philosophy. Therein lies the importance of the book, *Chuan-Hsi Lu.*

V

EPILOGUE

A STUDY OF INTUITIONISM

In his *Chuan-Hsi Lu,* Wang Yang-ming discusses extensively two main themes: "Mind is reason" and "Realization of *Liang-chih.*" These constitute the basis of Chinese intuitionism. To understand Wang's system of thought on this subject we must first go to Mencius.

Mencius, founder of the intuitive movement, advocates that man, as a rational being, is endowed with four dispositions: *jen, i, li,* and *chih. Jen,* as it is written in Chinese, consists of two characters: "man" and "two." This disposition thus denotes the relationship of man to man. *I* is the disposition which enables a person to distinguish between right and wrong. *Li* is decency or modesty, from which ceremony originates. *Chih* is knowing what a particular object is, and the ability to distinguish one thing from another. These four dispositions are the categories for value-judgments. They are not fully developed in a child; when they are developed, one may form moral or cognitive judgments on the basis of these dispositions. Mencius illustrates

his theory that man is endowed with the four dispositions from birth by the following example of a child falling into a well, and the rescuer's psychological reaction:

> When I say that all men have a mind which cannot bear to see the suffering of others, my meaning may be illustrated thus: Even nowadays, if men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they will without exception experience a feeling of alarm and distress. They will feel so, not as a ground on which they may gain the favor of the child's parents, nor as a ground on which they may seek the praise of their neighbors and friends, nor from a dislike of the reputation of having been unmoved by such a thing.

Mencius observes that the rescuer's reaction is spontaneous and has no other motive. He goes on to say that the four dispositions named above are innate and should be developed:

> From this case we may perceive that the feeling of commiseration is inherent in man, that the feeling of shame and dislike is inherent in man, that the feeling of modesty and complaisance is inherent in man, and that the feeling of approving and disapproving is inherent in man.
>
> The feeling of commiseration is the principle of *jen* (benevolence). The feeling of shame and dislike

is the principle of *i* (righteousness). The feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of *li* (propriety). The feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of *chih* (knowledge).

Since all men have these four principles in themselves, let them know to give them all their development and completion, and the issue will be like that of a fire which has begun to burn, or that of a spring which has begun to find vent.[1]

While Mencius placed emphasis on the four innate dispositions of man, he also knew full well that man's character depends much on his upbringing and education, that is, on external factors. The following remarks reveal this:

In good years most children are good, while in bad years most of them abandon themselves to evil. It is not owing to their natural powers conferred by Heaven that they are thus different. The abandonment is owing to the circumstances by which they allow their mind to be snared and drowned in evil.

There now is barley.—Let it be sown and covered up; the ground being the same, and the time of sowing likewise the same, it grows rapidly, and, when the full time is come, it is all found to be ripe. Although there may be inequalities of produce, owing to the difference of the soil, as rich or poor, to the unequal nourishment afforded by rain and dew,

and to the different ways in which man has performed his work in reference to it.

Thus all things which are the same in kind are like to one another — why should we doubt in regard to man, as if he were a solitary exception to this? The sage and we are the same in kind.[2]

The following is a quotation stating Mencius' theory of intuitive knowledge:

The ability possessed by men without having been acquired by learning is intuitive ability, and the knowledge possessed by them without the exercise of thought is intuitive knowledge.

Children carried in arms all know to love their parents, and, when they are grown a little, they all know to love their elder brothers.

Filial affection for parents is the working of *jen*. Respect for elders is the working of *i*. There is no other reason for those feelings; they belong to all under Heaven.[3]

Mencius was also very emphatic on the nature of right and wrong. According to him, this is self-evident. He said:

I like fish and I also like bear's paws (this is a type of delicacy). If I cannot have the two together, I will let the fish go, and take the bear's paws. So, I

like life and I also like righteousness. If I cannot keep the two together, I will let life go and choose righteousness.[4]

A Chinese discussion of moral obligation, that is, of right or wrong, concentrates on the discussion of the moral duties of each individual person in his station of life. It is thus more personal as contrasted with the Western discussion of what is good, or what are happiness and pleasure, which seeks a theoretical and objective basis. Mencius goes on to say:

I like life, indeed, but there is that which I like more than life, and, therefore, I will not seek to possess it by any improper means. I dislike death, indeed, but there is that which I dislike more than death, and therefore there are occasions when I will not avoid danger.

If among the things which man likes there were nothing which he likes more than life, why should he not use every means by which he could preserve it? If among the things which man dislikes there were nothing which he disliked more than death, why should he not do everything by which he could avoid danger? When by certain things they might avoid danger, they will not do them.

Therefore, men have that which they like more than life, and that which they dislike more than death.[5]

According to Mencius, right, good, or morality is thus self-evident to mankind. Man should take care not to lose it. He gives an example showing that a man cannot but choose what is right:

> Here are a small basket of rice and a platter of soup, and the case is one in which the getting of them will preserve life and the want of them will bring death; if they are offered with an insulting voice, even a tramp will not receive them, or, if you first tread upon them, even a beggar will not stoop to them.[6]

Mencius' intuitive theory, we see, is based on several factors: human dispositions, common approval or a communality of minds, and decisions made during the course of one's life. This intuition, therefore, is not identical with immediate insight, though the latter, being known to and being grasped by oneself, is clearly a part of the whole process.

After Mencius, Chinese philosophy came to a period of stagnation. Buddhism took advantage of this opportunity to popularize itself in China. Translation of Sanskrit Buddhist texts was the main work after the introduction of Buddhism into China in the first century B.C. Many centuries elapsed before the doctrine penetrated into the minds of the Chinese. The Ch'an (Meditation) Buddhist school started in the fifth century A.D. This school held that everyone possesses Buddhahood. Evidently, this is a Buddhist counterpart of Men-

cius' thesis that everyone can become a sage, as did Emperors Yao and Shun. Under the able leadership of Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Ch'an school, the view of the innate goodness of human nature gained hold. Mencius' theory, under this impetus, was revived. Confucianism and Buddhism now merged and continued in the same direction. Hui-neng's views on intuitive knowledge appealed to the Ch'an monks; through the latter, it was spread among Confucian scholars.

A brief history of the development of the Ch'an school will be useful here. The Ch'an school was founded by Bodhidharma, who came to China about A.D. 470-475. His message to the Chinese is as follows:

> There is a special transmission which goes beyond the scriptures;
> There is no use in setting it down in writing;
> Better appeal directly to the mind of men.
> When one sees one's nature, Buddhahood will be attained.[7]

One of his disciples, Hui-k'o, went to Bodhidharma saying: "I have no peace of mind. May I ask you how I may attain this peace of mind?" Bodhidharma replied: "Bring out your mind here before me. I shall pacify it." "But it is impossible for me to bring out my mind." "Then I have pacified your mind."[8]

This kind of apparently abstruse utterance tells us that mind is in oneself, and can be known only to oneself. Others can do nothing. Bodhidharma's teaching is that one should pacify one's *own* mind. Mind's work

is self-knowing and self-evident. It can never be physically shown or objectively or logically proved.

As the school gained influence, dominating other Buddhist schools, it gave stimulus to the Confucians, who began to read the Ch'an writings and seemed to be fond of them. Most of the T'ang (618-907) statesmen, scholars, and poets were closely associated with the Ch'an monks. Han-Yü (768-824), a literary man, sent a memorial to Emperor Hsien-Tsung as a protest against the welcome of Sirira of the Buddha. He also wrote an essay, *Yuan Tao* ("Inquiry on Tao"). In this essay, he defended the Confucian way of world-and-life affirmation. Han-Yü himself had a friend who was a Ch'anist, namely, the monk Tai-tien. To another friend he said: "Your story that I am converted to Buddhism is mere gossip. When I was in Ch'ao-chou, I met an old monk called Ta-tien (a Ch'an disciple of the monk Shih-t'ou, A.D. 700-790), who was intelligent and well-versed in philosophy. Since I am living in exile in a remote place, and can find no person with whom to discuss things, I invite him to come to the city and stay about two weeks. Tai-tien is a man who looks with contempt upon the world and who has his own convictions about truth. He is not one whit disturbed by what is going on in the world."[9] Han-Yü, an antagonist of Buddhism, shows an appreciation of the Ch'an monk's attitude toward the world. The poet Po Chü-i (772-846), following Han-Yü, also made friends with the Ch'an monks; he wrote eight songs on the mind-theory of the Ch'an monk Nien-k'ung.

1.

The eyes of the mind look at the objects outside the mind.
Why are the objects here? Why are they gone?
Meditating once and twice and more, the true or the false becomes known to the mind.

2.

Though the true is existent, it can be obscured by the false.
After the true is distinguished from the false, awakening is attained.
Without departing from the world, which is false being, the true voidness (the other world) is seen.

3.

When truth is maintained, nothing false can arise.
The original nature of the six senses is calm water; it is the *samadhi* (concentration), which is beyond life and death.

4.

When *samadhi* is attained, it is anchored.
Yet *samadhi* must be complemented by wisdom; then there will be no state of fixedness.
Like a pearl which goes around a plate:
The plate is *samadhi,* while the pearl is wisdom.

5.

When *samadhi* and wisdom go together, there is enlightenment.
It can penetrate all objects of the world, and nothing can escape its survey.
It works like a great round mirror, and there is only right response without being perturbed.

6.

When there is wisdom, there is real enlightenment and no becloudedness;
Where there is enlightenment, there is complete apprehension and no barrier.
Where there is no barrier, one knows how to adapt oneself.

7.

As complete apprehension varies with circumstances, it must be changed according to need.
No state is everlasting, it adjusts itself according to one's own wisdom.
It is only the Great *Karuna* (Love) which causes the One to complete the All.

8.

When the sufferings of all are freed,
The great *Karuna* can be abandoned;
The sufferings should not be taken as real;
The *Karuna* can also be considered as false among the sentient.

Who then is the real savior or the saved?[10]

Chinese Ch'an Buddhism, which began with Bodhidharma, was active for a period of five centuries before the revival of Confucianism during the Sung dynasty (960-1279).

The essential principles of Ch'an Buddhism are: (1) To make the mind master; (2) To have immediate insight from the mind. These two principles contributed very much to the revival of Neo-Confucianism and especially to the rise of the School of Mind during the Sung dynasty.

The Sung Confucians were not unanimous in this way of thinking. There were two schools: The School of Mind (*hsin-hsüeh*), which believes in restoring the original mind; and the School of Reason (*li-hsüeh*), which believes in the acquisition of more knowledge from the external world. Lu Chiu-yüan (Lu Hsiang-shan, 1139-1193) and Yang Chien (1140-1226) are names connected with *hsin-hsüeh,* while Ch'eng I (1033-1107), Chu Hsi (1130-1200), and their followers profess their belief in *li-hsüeh.* Their common feature is that the knowledge of what is right comes from the mind.

Lu Chiu-yüan was the pioneer of the School of Mind during the Sung dynasty. Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529) succeeded Lu's work during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). What follows is a brief summary of their contributions.

Lu used to say, "Go to the original mind." His philosophy is based on the following three principles:

1. *To establish what is fundamental or great.* He learned this principle from Mencius. It consists in the recognition of mind and in the elimination of the desires of the senses. Lu Chiu-yüan agrees with Mencius that, if one submits oneself to the authority of the mind, one has the innate ability to discover what is right for oneself because one's nature is perfect or complete from one's birth.

2. *To eliminate desire.* Though a man is complete in himself, yet he is often confused. Why? Because he is excited by sensation, desire, and passion, or because he becomes prejudiced as a result of his likes and dislikes.

3. *Not to consider knowledge-seeking as of prime importance.* Lu was convinced of the supremacy of mind. Based on this conviction, he depreciated the view that mind should seek more knowledge from outside.

In a letter to his disciple, Tseng Chai-chih, he clarified his point:

> Reason is a natural gift from Heaven; it is not imported from outside. Reason is the master. As long as the master is there, nothing can seduce you, and no false theory can bring you to a state of uncertainty. On the other hand, if reason is not so bright, there will be no master. The result is that one is likely to become extravagant in his theories,

and will depend more on such external sources as books than on one's own mind, which should be the master. The natural gift from Heaven will then become a guest. Thus, the host is turned into a guest, and the guest into a host; the positions of host and guest will be reversed. Those who trust such external sources as books lead themselves into confusion.[11]

This letter obviously is a condemnation of Chu Hsi, the advocate of the School of Reason.

We shall now see how Lu Chiu-yüan applies the Ch'an Buddhist technique, that is, that mind knows right or wrong by itself, in his dealings with his disciple, Yang Chien. When Yang Chien, a sub-magistrate in the county of Fu-yang, became a pupil of Lu, he asked him, "What is the original mind?" Lu quoted the following sentences from Mencius:

> Commiseration is the begining of *jen* (benevolence), the feeling of shame is the beginning of *i* (righteousness), the feeling of modesty is the beginning of *li* (decency or propriety), the act of approving and disapproving is the beginning of *chih* (knowledge). [And he concluded:] This is the original mind.[12]

Yang Chien answered: "As a boy I knew these sentences by heart, but I have not understood what is the original mind." Yang repeated the same question many times, but Lu always repeated the same answer.

One could not make the other understand what he meant.

Yang Chien, being a judge, gave a verdict in a lawsuit involving the sale of fans. He then came to Lu again and asked the question about the original mind. Lu said, "When you sit as a judge and decide the case, you know which side is right, which side is wrong. This mind, which knows right and wrong, is your original mind."[13] Then Yang was suddenly awakened by this reminder and became convinced that mind is self-knowing and self-evident.

These theories of the Ch'anists and Lu Chiu-yüan cannot be condemned as mere speculation or nonsense, as the logical positivists are inclined to do. The Ch'anists and Lu Chiu-yüan show clearly that in the nature and work of the mind the knower and the known coincide.

We come now to the Ming dynasty. At first, Wang Yang-ming had difficulty understanding the Confucian philosophy, particularly in regard to the principle "investigation of things." Chu Hsi's interpretation is that certain principles, which one must find out by investigation, underlie all things. Wang applied Chu Hsi's theory to the bamboo which grew in Wang's garden, trying to find its principle. After much reflection, Wang still did not understand. He fell ill from the strenuous effort to understand. Wang concluded that his anxiety to learn was the cause for his failure to understand. But an idea came to him that, as things and their principles

are separate, how can they be identified in one's mind? Then he was sick again from the strain. He then gave up thinking about the theory of investigation of things for a short time.

When he was thirty-eight he was sent away to Lung-ch'ang, a district of Kuei-chow Province, as a magistrate. Suddenly he was enlightened in regard to the meaning of the investigation of things. He made such a loud noise that those who slept in the same house were awakened. His understanding was based on the idea that so-called things are nothing but objects in consciousness. As things, when they are known, must go through consciousness, naturally the principles of things can be found out by mind. Wang went through all the classics and found that what is written in the books agreed with his new discovery. From this moment on he held the theory that mind is reason, or knowing is the core of reality.

This shows how Wang defined his fundamental concepts, and how his thought-structure is built: "What is called reason is an integrative system. That in which reason is condensed is called human nature. The master of this condensation is mind. When mind works with a directive effort, it is will. When it works in a state of intelligence, distinctness, and clarity, it is cognition. The objects which appear in consciouness are things."[14] This quotation is only a nuclear part of his thought; to understand him fully we must study him fully.

In one place our philosopher comments: "Intelligibility fills the universe. Man, imprisoned in his physic-

al body, is sometimes separated from intelligibility. Nevertheless, his intuitive knowledge is the controlling power of the cosmos and of the gods. If there were no intellect in the universe, who would study the mysteries of the heavens? If there were no human intellect on earth, who would study the mysteries of the heavens? If there were no human intellect on earth, who would study the profundities of *terra firma*? If the spirits had no knowledge of mankind, how could they reveal themselves in fortune and misfortune? Heaven, earth, and deities would be non-existent if they were separated from the human intellect. On the other hand, if man's intellect were divorced from heaven, earth, and deities, how could it exercise its functions?"[15]

The gist of some of Wang's statements is that, because animals and grains are nourishment for men, and because herb and mineral medicines cure disease, there must be a spiritual affinity between the biological and physical worlds, on the one hand, and mankind, on the other. That intelligibility exists at the core of the universe was our philosopher's prime conviction. At this core man is intimately related to the supersensible world above and the world of nature below. The universe is a unity with man at its center.

The following dialogue between Wang and a disciple tells us more clearly about his understanding of the universe as a whole:

> Somebody asked: "With regard to the unity of the human mind and the manifoldness of things,

we have an example in the human body, because it is an organism maintained by the circulation of the blood and the operation of the nervous system. Therefore, the body is called a unity. But as man A is different from man B, and as animals and plants are even farther apart from man because of their differentness, how can all constitute a unity?"

Wang answered: "You must look to the responses in your mind. It is not only that animals and plants constitute a unity with you, the universe forms a unity with you. Even the spirits form a unity with you."

Wang asked his disciple: "What is the mind of the universe?"

And the disciple answered: "I heard some time ago that man is the mind of the universe."

The disciple then asked: "Why is man called mind?"

Wang replied: "Mind means nothing but intelligence. What fills the whole world is intelligibility. As a man is built up by his physical body, he is intercepted and isolated from the whole. Intelligence is the master of the universe and the spirits. Without intelligence how can the profundity of the earth be studied? Without intelligence how can fortune and misfortune be revealed by the spirits? If heaven, earth, spirits, and the manifoldness of things were separated from intelligence, all of them would lose

their existence. If my intelligence were separated from the universe, the spirits, and the manifoldness of things, it would lose its existence, too. This is why I say that they [my intelligence, the spirits, and the manifoldness of things] together constitute an integration from which none of them can be divorced."[16]

This dialogue tells us how Wang looked at this fundamental problem. He means to say that intelligibility is reality. Intelligibility has two terms: at one end, it is mind, which knows; and, at the other end, it is the universe, which is known. Neither has any substantiality without the other, nor can it mean anything to mankind. Therefore, Wang said: "The eye of man by itself is not sufficient unto itself. It must have the shapes and the colors of the manifold things as its objects. The ear has no substantiality by itself, but must have all kinds of sounds in the universe to listen to. The nose has no substantiality by itself, but must perceive the smells of the world. The mouth cannot do otherwise than taste whatever is tasteful. The mind is to know right and wrong concerning the challenges and the responses which happen between things and itself."[17]

Wang means that the nature of the world depends on knowing, and that without intelligibility, or mind, there would be only darkness of outlook or chaos of perception. Therefore he said: "*Liang-chih,* or intuitive knowledge, is the spirituality of the universal creation. This spirituality creates heaven, earth, and the spirits.

It is the highest, the Absolute. If a man is quite conscious of *liang-chih,* he feels so happy that he cannot help but dance with his hands and feet."[18]

Wang considers that *liang-chih* is like the sun in brilliance and power; it knows what is right and what is wrong; it embodies the categorical imperatives. But *liang-chih,* or mind, must be kept pure and unselfish lest it manifest in the human mind like the sun darkened by the clouds. Spirituality is reality, but the grasp of reality depends on a pure and unselfish mind. Wang liked to quote from the *Doctrine of the Mean.* For instance: "It is said in the *Book of Poetry* that the hawk flies up to heaven, fish leap in the sea. This is an allusion to how the way is seen from above and from below."[19] Birds are flying in high heaven and fish are swimming in the sea, and the implication is that much mystery lies beyond. It is intelligible that the whole universe is an integration.

This joining together of truth and goodness is simply the definition of *liang-chih,* and one which Wang himself would have wished he had originated. To Wang, goodness and the light of truth are the reality of the universe.

[1] Legge, *Mencius,* Book IIA. iv. 4, 5, 7.
[2] *Ibid.,* Book VIA. vii. 1-3.
[3] *Ibid.,* Book VIIA. xv. 1-3.
[4] *Ibid.,* Book VIA. x. 1.
[5] *Ibid.,* Book VIA. x. 2-5.

[6] *Ibid.*, Book VIA. x.6.
[7] Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957), p. 135, footnote 1.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] Han-Yü, *Han Ch'ang-li chi* (Collected Works), ch. 18.
[10] Keitoku Dentoroku, *Ching-te ch'üan-teng lu* ("The Record of the Transmission of the Lamp"), The Tripitaka, J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe, eds., Vol. 51, Bk. XXIX (Tokyo: The Taisho Issai-kyo Kanko Kwai, 1928), pp. 454-455.
[11] Lu Chiu-yüan, *Hsiang-shan hsien-sheng chi* ("Collected Works"), Book I. Letter to Tseng Chai-chih.
[12] *Ibid.*, Book XXXVI, Chronology.
[13] *Loc. cit.*
[14] Wang Yang-ming: *Chuan-Hsi Lu* ("Collected Works"), letter to Lo Ch'in-shun, Book II, Ssu-pu pei-yao (ed.) (Shanghai: Chung Hua Book Co., n.d.), p. 28.
[15] *Ibid.*, Book III, p. 26.
[16] *Ibid.*, Book III, p. 26.
[17] *Ibid.*, Book III, p. 14.
[18] *Loc. cit.*
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Appendix

To show Wang Yang-ming's appreciation of the old philosopher, Lu Chiu-yüan (1139-93) or Lu Hsiang-shan as he is best known, we reproduce here the author's English translation in its entirety of Wang's preface to Lu's collected works. Lu and Wang, usually referred to as the Lu-Wang School or the School of Mind, created a great stir in the Chinese philosophical world after Chu Hsi.

The science of sagehood is the science of mind. What was transmitted from Yao and Shun to Yü lay in the words: "The mind of man is full of danger: the mind of *Tao* is subtle. Be proficient and unitive. Hold the mean firmly." This was the source of the science of mind. What was called the 'mean' was the mind of *Tao*. When the mind of *Tao* exists, in its proficiency and unity, it is *Jen,* which is also the mean. The work of Confucius and Mencius was to devote the self to *Jen,* which in turn was derived from the transmitted message about proficiency and unity. In later ages there grew up the belief that the object of one's seeking should be on the outside rather than the inside. Therefore, even a disciple of Confucius, Tzu-kung, thought that the work of his master consisted of wide reading and memorizing, and that *Jen* became a matter of giving more alms to more people. Tzu-kung's mistake was

corrected by Confucius in his remark that what he sought was a pervading unity, and that the exercise of *Jen* should begin with one's self. The meaning of this remark was simply that endeavor should begin with one's own mind. In Mencius' days, Mo-tzu understood *Jen* to consist, as it were, in rubbing the entire body smooth, from the crown to the heel, in an effort to confer benefits on the whole kingdom. At this same time, Kao-tzu supposed that *Jen* was on the inside, while *I* (righteousness) was on the outside. The science of mind became completely deteriorated. It was Mencius who refuted the theory of the externality of *I*. Mencius insisted that the work of the philosopher should be to seek the mind which has gone astray. Again he said that *Jen, I, Li,* and *Chih* were not derived from the outside, but were innate. With the decline of the 'royal way,' power-politics prevailed. The utilitarians disguised their objectives under the name of heavenly reason, but what they actually sought was their self-interest. The so-called reason was just a name to deceive the people. As long as they did not consider mind as the source, where could reason find a place to stay? Since then, mind and reason have become separated, so that the effort toward proficiency and unity was lost. Many philosophers went off along devious ways and became interested in the various aspects of life such as knowledge, terms, numbers, and institutions. That was how the so-called investigation of things originated. What such philosophers did not know was that mind *is* reason,

and that neither mind nor reason can be found in the external world.

Subsequently, when the doctrines of Buddha and Lao Tzu gained the upper hand, devotees of these schools espoused the theory of emptiness. They overlooked human relationships and the principles of the phenomenal world. Yet their aim was the enlightenment of the mind. But mind is correlated with knowledge of the world. When knowledge of the world is overlooked, how can one find one's mind?

In the Sung dynasty, Chou Tun-i and the Ch'eng brothers traced their thought back to its source in Confucius and Mencius. Chou drafted the *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate,* and established the human standard in *Jen, I, Chung,* and *Cheng* (rectitude). He also formulated the doctrine of calmness. Ch'eng Hao advocated the theory of tranquillity. Since then, the tradition of proficiency and unity was restored. Then Lu Chiu-yüan was born in the Southern Sung dynasty. Though Lu's character with respect to peaceful-mindedness was not the equal of that of Chou Tun-i or of either of the Ch'eng brothers, yet the simplicity and directness of his method made him a successor to Mencius. His daring arguments were the result of his temperament, but his belief in the supremacy of mind was identical with that of Mencius. Therefore, I say that the philosophy of Lu Chiu-yüan is the philosophy of Mencius. Many people disliked Lu Chiu-yüan because of his difference of opinion with Chu Hsi. The former philosopher was condemned as a follower of Ch'an, as a

Buddhist who disregarded human relationships and the principles of the phenomenal world, and whose attitude towards life, therefore, was negative. If the doctrine of Lu Chiu-yüan had really been negative, then it would have been justly condemned as of the Ch'an school. But the works of the Ch'an school and of Lu Chiu-yüan are still in existence, and it is easy to compare the one with the other. Similarity and difference between them may be readily seen by anyone who looks, without having to spend much effort in research. Nevertheless, the label of being a Ch'an, having once been started, was believed by many people. The situation resembled that in which a dwarf, lost in a crowd around a stage, is unable to understand all the laughing and crying. The unfortunate dwarf represents the critic who believes what he hears without seeing with his own eyes, or one who knows the meaning of the letter without understanding the significance of the spirit.

In this world much approval and disapproval, similarity and difference, derive themselves from subjective and habitual ways of thinking, which even the learned cannot avoid.

The prefect, Li Mao-yüan, has asked me to write a preface for the collected works of Lu Chiu-yüan. What can I add to the words of Lu? If those who read these collected works can reflect in their own minds and abandon their habitual ways of thinking, they will find out whether rice is good or bad according to whether it is finely or coarsely ground.

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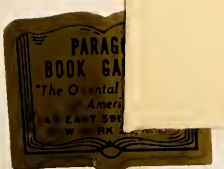

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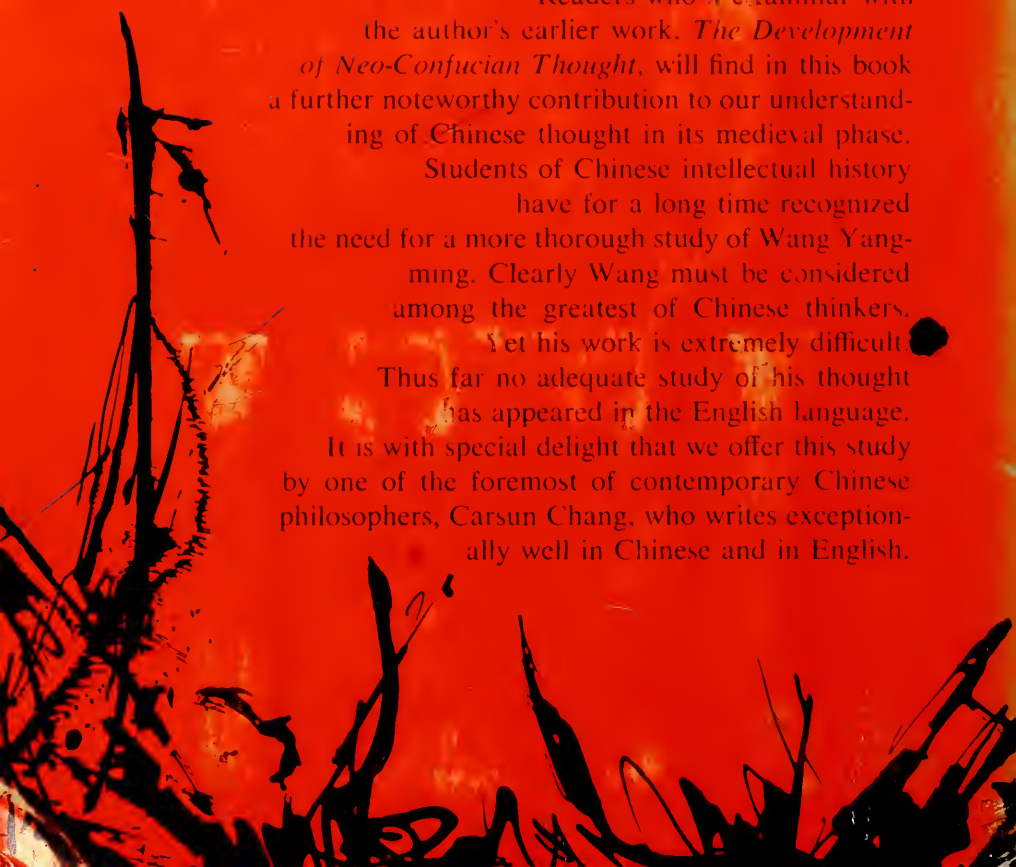
WANG YANG-MING:

Idealist Philosopher of 16th century China

By Carsun Chang

Readers who are familiar with the author's earlier work, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, will find in this book a further noteworthy contribution to our understanding of Chinese thought in its medieval phase. Students of Chinese intellectual history have for a long time recognized the need for a more thorough study of Wang Yang-ming. Clearly Wang must be considered among the greatest of Chinese thinkers. Yet his work is extremely difficult. Thus far no adequate study of his thought has appeared in the English language. It is with special delight that we offer this study by one of the foremost of contemporary Chinese philosophers, Carsun Chang, who writes exceptionally well in Chinese and in English.